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UCLA Historical Journal

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ARTICLES

The Language of Trust: Sixteenth-century Genoese Commercial Correspondence. 1
Ricardo Court

The Mystic Hordes of Memory: How Thomas Nast went from Five Points to *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News* 26
Fiona Galvin

Ireland's Neutrality Policy in World War II: The Impact of Belligerent Pressures on the Implementation of Neutrality 60
Greg Spelman

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

The Priest and the Tsaricide 83
Claudia Verhoeven

Ottoman State Formation: Eugene Rogan's Frontiers of State in the Late Ottoman Empire, Trans-Jordan, 1850-1921 97
Kent F. Schull

BOOK REVIEWS

Matthew S. Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Military of Samarra, 200-275 AH/815-889 CE.* 106
Kent F. Schull

William Beik. ***Louis XIV and Absolutism: A Brief Study with Documents.*** 107
Joan G. Gonzalez

Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra. ***How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World.*** 110
Peter Villella

Esteban Buch. ***Beethoven's Ninth: A Political History.*** **Translated by Richard Miller.** 114
Joan G. Gonzalez

James A Secord, ***Victorian Sensation: the Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.*** 116
Sameer Shah

Jim Weeks, ***Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine.*** **Thomas A. Desjardin,** ***These Honored Dead: How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory.*** 119
Christopher Bates

Henning, Joseph M. ***Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American-Japanese Relations.*** 121
Joshua Paddison

Alex Zwerdling, ***Improvised Europeans: American Literary Expatriates and the Siege of London.*** 124
Linus Kafka

The Language of Trust: Sixteenth-century Genoese Commercial Correspondence.

Ricardo Court

Sixteenth-century merchants plying the waters of the Western Mediterranean used commercial letters written in a nuanced language that enabled them to communicate trust. The Language of Trust was so strong that it enabled traders to bridge more traditional methods of enforcing their agreements. For example, they rendered strong bonds of kinship or matrimony unnecessary to long-distance trade. Genoese merchants active in the western basin conducted trade within a large but closed community of merchants, probably several hundred in number, but certainly too many for each to know the other intimately.[1] Traders had scores of agents from which to choose and could shift between them at will. None of these traders were invested with any more than the most transient ties. At every turn, the Genoese traders seem to go against the common sense dictum to trust only when trust is earned. The social landscape that the Brignole documents reveal was constituted of hundreds of relationships that were weak, flexible, resilient, and unregulated by state, clan, or guild.

There is a counter-intuitive characteristic to these particular commercial networks: no merchant could be assured of repeated exchanges with any specific trader. This 'weak' characteristic was deliberately preserved in their networks. Each trader relied on future exchanges with some members of the group as a whole. In

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[1] An accurate number is hard to verify. The enrollments of *nobili nuovi minori* into the Golden Book of the Genoese Nobility in 1528, the approximately 2000 shareholders in the *Banco di San Giorgio*, the lists of major and minor office-holders compiled in the eighteenth century, and the numbers of agents and merchants found in the Brignole and Sale ledgers strongly suggests hundreds or perhaps a few thousand, rather than dozens, of Genoese merchants active in the Western Mediterranean.

the Genoese commercial sphere, there was no formal or informal institution that had the ability to transmit effectively the reputation of any given trader to the whole group. Every season Genoese merchants and agents entered into joint ventures with different members of the larger group, determined by market realities, without knowing any specific information about an individual trader beyond their limited personal experience. Historians have long assumed that such guarantees were necessary to the preservation of trust.[2] In fact my evidence shows that trust, and consequently the mitigation of risk, was preserved without them.

The potential of future dealings kept alive the promise of future economic gains, but it did something more important. Potential future dealings acted as a reserve that allowed traders to confront greater complexity and uncertainty in the economic world. The bank of potential relationships bridged periods of activity, and periods of economic gain. Weak relationships based on calculated risk enabled traders to confront uncertainty with flexibility that close coalitions or kinship could not. Traders were constantly on the lookout to initiate new weak relationships. The commercial environment of the second half of the sixteenth century allowed traders to pool capital, to spread risk, and to enjoy the services of agents in distant locations without having to invest heavily in most of their relationships. Their enterprises were more flexible and their transaction costs were greatly reduced, compared to those

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[2] Important background for this study is provided in: "Un quadriennio critico: 1575-1578, Contrasti e nuovi orientamenti nella societá genovese nel quadro della crisi finanziaria spagnola," in *Fatti e idee di storia economica nei secoli XII-XX,* (Bologna: Il mulino, 1976); J. Francis Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and galleys: changing technology and Mediterranean warfare at sea in the sixteenth century*, (London: New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Gioffrè, *Gênes et les foires de change: De Lyon à Besançon,* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960); H. *Kellenbenz,* "Die fremden Kaufleute auf der Iberischen Halbinsel vom 15 Jahrhundert bis zum 16 Jahrhunderts," in *Fremde Kanfleute auf der Iberischen Halbinsel,* (Köln, Wien: Böhlau, 1970); H. Lapeyre, "Les exportations de laine de Castille sus le règne de Phillipe II," in *La lana come materia prima: I fenomeni della sua produzione e circolazione nei secoli XIII-XVII,* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1974); R. Ragosta, ed., Navigazioni mediterranee e connessioni continentali (secoli XI-XVI), (Napoli: L. Pironti, 1982); C. Trasselli, "I rapporti tra Genova e la Sicilia dai Normani al '900," in *Genova e i Genovesi a Palermo,* (Genova: Sagep, 1980), pp. 26-28; C. Trasselli, *Messina nei secoli d'oro: storia di una città dal Trecento al Seicento,* (Messina: Intilla, 1988); Various authors, *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Storici "Rapporti Genova-Mediterraneo-Atlantico nell'Età Moderna,"* (Genoa: Sagep, 1983); V. Vázquez de Prada, *Lettres marchandes d'Anvers,* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960); C. Verlinden, *València, un mercat medieval,* (Valencia: Diputació Provincial de València, 1985).

entailed in the contracts of *comenda*, traveling agents, and resident agents typical of the first half of the century. The commercial world had become more complex and uncertain, and the language of trust evolved to manage that complexity and uncertainty.

Traders used their correspondence to prevent fraud, communicate expectations, and encourage vigorous effort on their behalf, and thus promoted trust which allowed partners to signal mutual obligations and a willingness to reciprocate trust. An extensive system of correspondence -- bills of lading, exchange notes, insurance policies, purchase orders, and above all, letters between partners -- would eventually expose any obvious violation of trust. The ability to communicate a willingness to reciprocate trust with unfamiliar colleagues is one reason these ethnically homogeneous trading networks were so successful. Such culturally defined networks did much more than punish defectors. Their ability to rely on reciprocal interactions allowed all traders to enjoy cheap, reliable, short-term relationships, to concentrate their trust costs, and to maintain flexibility. All of the Brignole's foreign agents, with the exception of two shipping agents in Tuscany, were Genoese living abroad. In this environment a seemingly irrational reciprocity, that is cooperation without the ability to widely sanction violators of trust, was stable and utilized as a public good in the real world.

The Brignole placed themselves in just such a framework of relationships, at first incidentally to their manufacturing, and then purposefully with their dealings in commodities. Antonio Brignole started a small venture in Flanders in 1554, the year of his majority at the age of twenty. The venture was independent and disconnected from the family enterprise to shield the rest of the family business from the risks of an untried agent. During his son's stay in Antwerp, Giovanni did not have to pay for Antonio's upkeep. To the contrary, Giovanni was able to compel his other partners to utilize his son's agency services in Antwerp, thus financing his son's foreign apprenticeship. Even though he was not legally responsible for his son's actions, Giovanni lent his son his prestige, and therefore took responsibility for Antonio as he would have for any other agent. The activities of Antonio's business adolescence were folded back into the larger family endeavor six years later, when his foreign education was deemed complete. Antonio's accounts receivable were transferred to the Brignole's deposit banker in Antwerp, whereby the banker became the Brignole's debtor and agent. Precisely because he was no

longer green, Antonio's activities were registered in the master ledger together with the *Volta* and all the rest of their assets and liabilities.

Antonio's presence is evident everywhere in the first ledger after his return to Genoa from the Low Countries. Antonio immediately expanded his exchange business beyond his tried-and-true cousins while the possibilities of dealing with acquaintances began to pervade their commerce. Antonio began to work with non-kin merchants and agents, whom he trusted as deeply as he had trusted close kin. By 1567 Antonio had built a network of his own, buttressed by the joint ventures with which Giovanni had supplied his *Volta*. The difference between Antonio's network and his father's was that Antonio focused soley on the commodities trade. Antonio's brother Francesco took over the day-to-day running of the *Volta* while Antonio concerned himself with sales, supplies, and trips to the quarterly exchange fair. Antonio's network was so completely focused on commodities traders that when his brother died suddenly in 1567, Antonio abruptly abandoned the *Volta*; he stopped delivering raw silk to the artisans, he stopped paying rent on the buildings that housed their looms, and he sold the looms themselves. In a matter of a few days, more than five decades of work was reduced to a few minor debts and a small amount of left-over velvet. A half-century of effort came to a sudden end when the *Volta* simply ceased to exist.

Despite the drastic changes in their activity the Brignole took great pains to preserve continuity, to demonstrate to all of their associates, from kin to the most distant acquaintance, that their series of exchanges would continue as before. Continuity was an important element in communicating a willingness to cooperate. The Brignole took steps to avoid the problem of cheating in finite series of exchanges. Cheating was always a danger when a trader's last transaction was known because there are no adverse consequences for the cheater. If a merchant were going to retire, he might as well cheat all of his associates on the last exchange. He might do this by committing outright fraud, but more likely he would not observe his obligations, would act slothfully, or would refuse to make his assets available to his associates after they had done so for him. If a merchant were close to retirement, or if he were making arrangements to scale down his business, his associates might cheat him preemptively. They might not know for sure when the last exchange would come, but they would know that they were involved in a finite series. Finite series of

exchanges destroy confidence since everyone can be expected to cheat on the last exchange; the penultimate transaction then becomes in effect the last one, and therefore everyone will cheat or be cheated. This continues to the third to last, to the fourth to last, etc., in an infinite regression until no honest trades are possible. Without outside enforcement, trust collapses as soon as the total number of future transactions is known to be finite, even when the exact number of future trades is unknown. Even though this discussion is highly schematic, the Brignole seem to have been vividly aware of it, and took steps to preserve the relationships that they had built over fifty years.

The tactics the Brignole employed to preserve trust among their partners and associates confirms that trust is transferable, and, that in the right environment, cooperation is rational. In order to preserve continuity, the Brignole twice used a tool called an *avallo,* which roughly translates to "guarantee." The *avallo* was an important and publicly declared bridge that transformed a finite series of exchanges into an infinite series, by transferring the ownership of accounts receivable and the responsibility for accounts payable between two individuals. The Brignole Company was not legally a *"compagnia,"* or a partnership, it was a sole proprietorship, or the sum of Giovanni Brignole's assets and liabilities. It would come to an end when Giovanni died, or shortly thereafter. Even if the heirs of a business were clear, multiple heirs could mean a division of assets, and therefore a division of responsibilities, and certainly a disruption of a smooth relationships. An *avallo* was a convenient legal fiction occasionally employed by merchants that allowed for the renaming of an account from "Giacomo Rossi" to "the heirs of Giacomo Rossi." Giovanni's ledger-books were the legal expression of Giovanni himself. They were proof of his activities: debits, credits, property, and responsibilities. Legally a merchant's ledger-book was much more than a merchant's notebook. It was so universally respected that it could be entered as evidence in a civil trial on an equal footing with notaries' documents. By definition, these books were not transferable. Giovanni Brignole employed the *avallo's* accounting gymnastics to preserve and cultivate continuity.

The first *avallo* transferred the accounts of Antonio's business apprenticeship in Antwerp to his deposit banker, Geronimo Lomellino Chiavari. Antonio left Antwerp in 1560, to follow his uncles as an apprentice in their international exchange banking

business. After four years as a resident of Antwerp, he needed to declare publicly the continuity of his accounts before leaving the city.[3] Giovanni transferred the net value of Antonio's accounts into his own account book as a debit account owed by Geronimo Lomellino Chiavari. The individual accounts receivable and payable were entered into a clearing account *"avallo"*, in place of an exit balance sheet, and were from there linked to new accounts in Geronimo's ledger. In the aggregate, no money had changed hands, but relationships certainly had changed. With an accounting sleight-of-hand, Antonio had transferred his ownership and his responsibilities to Geronimo. Since his accounts had been backed by their connection with the Brignole, Geronimo not only acquired a ready-made activity, he also enjoyed a transfer of Antonio's and his father Giovanni's considerable reputations. After four years setting up his first venture, the twenty-six year-old Antonio could concentrate on other activities, letting his first entrepreneurial offspring run itself.

The second and far more substantial *avallo* transferred the bulk of Giovanni's activities to his remaining sons Antonio and Teramo in 1573, just one year before his death at ninety-one. Antonio, with his younger brother, Teramo, had been in command of the day-to-day functions of the family firm since 1567, and afterwards they effected major changes in the direction of their enterprise. When they were at the quarterly exchange fair, they did business under the name "Antonio and Teramo Cicala Brignole of Besanzone"; in limited activities they were "Antonio and Teramo Cicala Brignole of Genoa"; and when they ran the family business, they did so under the name of "Giovanni Cicala Brignole of Genoa." In every practical sense, the prestige and reputation of "Giovanni Cicala Brignole of Genoa" was already synonymous with "Antonio and Teramo Cicala Brignole of Genoa." Antonio had already changed the direction of their family enterprise by liquidating the *Volta* in 1567. The *avallo* had set those changes in stone and merged the various "Antonio Brignoles" into one.

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[3] Archivio Storico Civico di Genova, Fondo Brignole Sale (ASCG-BS) volume 9, quaderno B, *Avallo*, p. 192. There is reason to believe that before an agent could leave town he had to reconcile his accounts. When Antonio's younger brother Teramo left Seville to return home to Genoa in 1572 he had to send a barrage of letters to declare that the company "Teramo Cicala Brignole and Antonio Pallavicino Coronata of Seville" would hereafter be known as "Antonio Pallavicino Coronata of Seville" and that all assets and liabilities were to be transferred from one entity to the other. That particular *avallo* does not survive. ASCG-BS 102, pp.1-20

When Antonio returned to Genoa in 1562, after six years abroad, his early experience profoundly influenced how the Brignole would manage their enterprise in the future. Like his father, Antonio wrote letters to his close associates to manage his affairs abroad, but Antonio used the elements of those letters to promote trust in a more subtle way, and with a wider range of different traders. The rhetoric of his letters was an important element in his strategy to expand his activity beyond his kin. Like any of his contemporaries, every outgoing letter he wrote was copied into his letter register, a practice which was both mandatory and overt. Generally, each letter opened with when the letter was sent, by what means, to which letter it responded, and how many of the addressee's letters were received, when, and by what route, since the last letter was sent. The common phrase, "confirming what we have already written," reassured the addressee that while writing his response Antonio had his letter register opened to the most recent information sent to that correspondent. A premium was placed on maintaining clarity and consistency in multiple business letters. Even the rigorous use of the second person plural, *voi* and *vostri* was more than an archaic formality. It served to prevent confusion by eliminating the ambiguity between the formal second person singular 'your', *suoi*, and the third person singular 'his', *suoi*. The meticulous communication of exactly when information was received helped mitigate the effects of a slow postal system and quickly changing conditions. Reporting those changes was even more important;

> April 22, 1572, to our Teramo and Antonio in Seville.
>
> Dearest noble brothers, written on the eighteenth of this month by way of post and on the fourteenth of this month by way of the galley in the hand of Nicolò Usodimare Maggiolo embarked to sail to Granada in which you will have seen how we approve of your resolution to not continue in that activity and for which we are waiting desirous of newer letter from you in order to understand...[4]

In this letter Antonio Brignole writes to his brother Teramo, who had been sent to Seville with Antonio Coronata, the younger

[4] ASCG-BS 102, p. 20.

brother of Antonio's close associate Bartolomeo Coronata. Antonio was not responding to specific letters in the past, for as he says in the letter, they were all too old and he was awaiting letters that were *più fresche.* A letter sent with the *corriere*, the regular post, was quick but it might never arrive. The letter sent with their cousin Nicolò would arrive more slowly, but barring some misfortune, it would definitely arrive. The more important the letter was, the more likely it would be sent two or three times, in as many different ways. On April 28, Antonio was still waiting and he sent a third letter, "Still we are without your letters, it will suffice to affirm that which we have written to you adding that we still are waiting ."[5] Antonio repeated his approval of Teramo's decision to suspend their current wool venture in Seville, but was being kept waiting as to the latest details and conditions:

> The first of April, we find two of your dear letters of the 31 of January arrived on the sixth of February and the other on the fourteenth and after those a copy arrived on the first of March, in response to which we say that we have understood that the commission for wool has already been given to Usodimare for which we have a 50 percent interest… [6]

At first glance, the letter of April 1 seems in response to a letter from an agent who said, "I have received your order and I have carried it out." However, when considered with the previous letter, Antonio Brignole was communicating something more complex. Antonio was also doing more than confirming that he had received letters from his Seville agent, Antonio Coronata (his brother Teramo had long since returned to Genoa). He was also confirming that he had received word that his associate had made a decision on his behalf and when he knew of it. He continued the letter with further instructions concerning the decision to buy wool. Antonio was telling his agent, "I know that you have made changes on January 31 and February 14, I learned this on February 6 and March 1, and I confirm this along with further instructions on April 1. By the time you learn of these instructions conditions may have changed so as to render everything I have instructed you to do irrelevant and incorrect, you decide."

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[5] ASCG-BS 102, p. 20.
[6] ASCG-BS 102, p. 22.

The reality of delay was ever-present in the minds of all traders. Acknowledgment of the delay between any two points was a constant feature of every letter. The letters cited above moved very quickly--one took only six days to arrive. Depending on the weather, war, or a thousand other obstacles, letters between Seville and Genoa could have taken six or seven weeks each way. Frequently, several letters in which desperate pleas not to enter into a certain venture are followed by one letter in which the writer claims that God's will must have prevented the warnings from arriving on time--*come piace a Dio*--and in which he resolved to make do--*pigliar in grado.* Delay proclaimed at the top of every letter that the writer was separated from the decisions he would make and the information he would analyze. The addressees of both of the above letters were expected and trusted to act on the writer's behalf. Antonio confirmed this in the first letter: *approvavamo la resolutione fatta,* we approve of the action taken. Teramo had acted independently of his brother; he was not just following orders. Delay, delineated in every letter, reinforced the space of autonomous action. It is not too hard to imagine that Teramo might have acted himself; he was after all Antonio's brother. Similarly, Antonio Coronata was neither a family member nor employee, but he was still described in the letter headings as *nostro. Nostro* meant our man, and *Nobile fratello carissimo,* dearest noble brother, at the top of the first letter signaled a fraternal relationship with a brother, a cousin, or someone like a brother; someone with whom trust was, by definition ,secure. However, the autonomous space necessitated by delay had a similar effect on all correspondents. In the fabric of the letters' rhetoric we may read the limits of the autonomous space allowed even a short-term trader.

The younger Brignole inherited from their father a fraternal network, which was based on brothers and near brothers (cousins, uncles, and various other kin by marriage; sons and nephews of his father's close partners). Giovanni had built his network on his cloth mill and by building family associations. Antonio would reform it to engage in trade, and as a result the frequently used form of address *nostri* would refer to an increasing number of people outside of the family. Antonio addressed these close partners as *fratello carissimo,* dearest brother. The term of affection was reserved for those partners with whom a relationship of trust was beyond reproach, and from whom autonomous action was expected. The autonomous space that delay afforded to the

nobili honorandi Nazelli and Ferrero in Naples was more constricted, but nonetheless present. *Nobile honorando,* honored noble, was the default form of address reserved for unallied traders of equal or inferior status; *Magnifico honorando*, honored magnificence, *referred to unallied superiors.* For example, Nazelli and Ferrero were Genoese merchants, *nobili honorandi,* who ran a firm of their own based in Naples. While they were independent, they required relationships with firms like the Brignole to operate effectively. Nazelli and Ferrero bought southern oil and raw silk, and sold light cloth and northern manufactured goods. They needed assistance from larger concerns to move their wealth to where it was needed. By living abroad, Nazelli and Ferrero were investing heavily in trust in Naples. As a result they did not have to invest heavily in transient partners like the Brignole, with whom they conducted piecemeal, tit-for-tat, and unsupervised exchanges. In exchange for the transfers of funds that a larger concern could efficiently make for them, Nazelli and Ferrero rented out the trust investments they had with their own debtors and rented the ability to collect on those accounts receivable to whoever needed them.

Nazelli and Ferrero had to be able to assure their transient partners, like the Brignole, that they had invested in trust in their locale. In practice this meant that, when it came time to transfer funds or to deliver commodities, Nazelli and Ferrero guaranteed their debtors would pay. The Brignole were always fearful that transactions with secondary and tertiary agents would fall through because they were unconnected to the original contract establishing the debt to be collected, and because they often had no information beyond what amount they could collect, where they could collect it, and when. When entering into ventures with transient partners as well as with *fratelli* that necessitated the use of secondary agents, the Brignole insisted that their agent research local people, such as the buyers of Brignole wool, velvet, or light cloth, or from whom the Brignole would take delivery of cash, raw silk, or grain, in order to assure that cash would be on hand, or that no delay in the shipment of commodities would occur. *Avertendo, come sempre, al ben fidar,* went the refrain: "Reminding you, as always, to trust well," that is, to act with care when trusting outside the circle of *fratelli.*

The first surviving letter to Nazelli and Ferrero begins as would any letter to an agent:

April 4, 1572 to Nazelli and Ferrero in Naples

> Honored nobles, we find your dear letter of the 21 of the last month, in response to which we say that the reason for which you were not able to load the doblette on the galley...we must make do...[7]

When selling commodities, Nazelli and Ferrero were similar to any of the Brignole's close associates. The letter continues:

> We have also seen how you have arranged your deficit in the remittance to Montelione and how again three hundred ducats were contracted to you and you have remitted five hundred ducats all of which we approve, awaiting [confirmation] so that we may issue a credit. And because said Simone insists that that money be remitted to Montelione having insisted also to you, you have procured or will procure the effect and when you have, between contracts and remittances the provided 10,000 ducats circa, you will procure the rest on credit, you will know from him how much he needs and procuring for him until they do not have money unavailable...Farewell.[8]

Antonio Brignole wrote as he awaited confirmation of two remittances, for three hundred and five-hundred ducats, before making funds available in Genoa. Apparently, Antonio's brother-in-law's insistence was not enough to get Nazelli and Ferrero moving. Antonio had asked that Simone be given money whenever and wherever needed up to around 10,000 ducats and beyond that amount in order to secure loans. Antonio would make a similar sum available elsewhere in Europe after each payment. In other words, Antonio was willing to move 10,000 ducats for Nazelli and Ferrero in exchange for services extended to him and his kin. Nazelli and Ferrero would pressure their own debtors to pay in cash or in the commodities that Simone had purchased. As long as Nazelli and Ferrero heeded the reminder "to trust well," *avertendo al ben fidar,* they could maintain a cool, or weak, relationship with the Brignole, and their debtors had no need to invest in trust with the transient Simone Lomellini in order to sell their wares.

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[7] ASCG-BS 102, p. 130.
[8] ASCG-BS 102. p. 133.

Everyone benefited from the exchange: Simone got a roaming credit-line; Nazelli and Ferrero got their capital moved out of a closed marketplace, in this case Naples; Antonio was able to import commodities from people with whom he had absolutely no relationship, brokered by someone in whom he needed to make only small piecemeal trust-investments; costs were greatly reduced, as in-coming and out-going transfer commissions canceled each other out. Antonio had already built a limited relationship with Nazelli and Ferrero buying and selling commodities and merchandise. The fruits of that relationship were much more than light cloth, grain, oil, or raw silk. Neither party maintained a continuous relationship with the other and yet continued to trust each other. One day they sold commercial paper *(tratte)* to the Brignole, the next day they sold to one of the Giustiniani or the Bacciadonna. If Nazelli and Ferrero had cheated their clients, they would have lost their ability to move their own capital abroad. If their clients had cheated them, Nazelli and Ferrero's local capital, contacts, relationships, and knowledge of the region would become unavailable to them, or exceedingly expensive. The result would have been the same if either party entered into agreements on the local level with people who could not pay when their debts came due. They had to trust well outside the sequence of partners. They were reminded repeatedly, sometimes three times in the same letter, of their responsibility to trust well: *Avertendo sempre al ben fidar.*

Nazelli and Ferrero were neither family nor allies, but they were essential to filling in the gaps between family and ally. On April 28 Antonio asked that 300 ducats be sent wherever Simone Lomellini was at the time the letter was received.

> ...send the remittance directed to Geronimo Naschetto for our Simone to Montelione with an order that it be sent to him in Messina in the case that he is [no longer in Montelione].[9]

The Brignole company was in the *Mezzogiorno* to buy. The little that they made selling Dutch cloth and finished velvet bore no comparison to the amounts they spent on raw silk and grain. In order to do business in the South, Antonio needed partners with complementary activities. Even a rough fit would work:

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[9] ASCG-BS 102, p. 131.

> We have seen how it was not convenient for you to remit money in Montelione. That you can send the 1,400 ducats via Cosenza remitted to Luigi Ferrero is fine. We believe that you have done as you write in regard to the order from Simone, from whom we have not had any news, an order will be given for the completion of the commission in the [fair of the] Annunciation for which you should tell us how to issue the note

Nazelli and Ferrero could not engineer their debtors to make payment in Montelione. Antonio suspected that his brother-in-law Simone might go on to Cosenza and instructed Nazelli and Ferrero to look into the possibilities of capital there. In Naples there were other opportunities:

> ... for the needs of the war with the Turks we understand that there, there are opportunities for life and perpetual annuities, that are very safe and give a good revenue sanctioned by his holiness. Since we desire to take part it would be appreciated, if it does not burden you, to advise us on what is available day by day...[10]

While they relied on each other, neither the Brignole nor Nazelli and Ferrero were inclined to deepen their association. Both needed the flexibility to decline a commission or to request a remittance to a far-off city, while "...asking that you give the usual attention to the attached..." as needed.[11] Still, there existed an implied mutual obligation to deal with each other when their requirements meshed. When Antonio had to carve out some space for his in-law and take business away from his usual Messina agent he had to stress that notwithstanding the temporary change, he still felt obliged to Alessandro Lercaro. Lercaro had the same kind of interactions with the Brignole in Messina as did Nazelli and Ferrero:

> in response to your dearest letter of the 14 of the last, we shall say that we are not for now able to please you

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[10] ASCG-BS 102, p. 131.
[11] ASCG-BS 102, p. 133.

> this year by giving you commissions for raw silk having the same reason as you to search for them, on behalf of our Simone Lomellino (married to Antonio Brignole's sister Minetta) ...would that the deal be already concluded but since he is there for other particular business of ours, we are constrained by kinship to deal with him and not with others. We tell you definitely that when we do not have our own person there, we shall not neglect to give you a part...conforming to the promise made to you which we will not neglect you, when a similar occasion fixes itself, we are at your pleasure. Farewell.[12]

Antonio was not obliged to conduct trades in Naples or Messina, but he was moved to explain why he was doing business whenever he engaged anyone other than his usual agent. Antonio was loath to lose his ability to maneuver in Sicily, and understood that Alessandro Lercaro would not take the loss of a conduit for his capital sitting down. Alessandro Lercaro and Antonio Brignole were not allied traders, nor were they members of a common coalition. Antonio was explicit that the Brignole did not have their own man in Messina: "*vi dichiamo bene che sempre che noi non haremo costí persona propria,* we declare, as always, that we do not have our own person there." They were not Alessandro Lercaro's only clients, and he was certainly not the only agent in town, but when the Brignole needed something done in Messina, Alessandro Lecaro expected the commission. If Messina silk were low quality, if there were an over-abundance of specie driving prices up, or if there were advantageous conditions elsewhere, the Brignole were free to buy in another city. Their relationship was only as strong as their seasonal dealings required.

Nazelli and Ferrero traded their associations with the Brignole at a low cost. Neither risked heavily in their relationship, their dealings were tit-for-tat, but the little they had invested was very useful. Both could have easily defected to another agent or client with no consequence other than the loss of that trader's services in the future. This was the hazard that concerned them most, against which no one had even theoretical legal recourse. Their aversion to burning their bridges would have prevented them from ever trying to damage the other's reputation for any such defection.

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[12] ASCG-BS 102, p. 152.

However. because their own association had a history, and because of a mutually perceived obligation, their weak relationship was nonetheless stable.

Antonio could even lend his association with Nazelli and Ferrero to a third party. That is to say, he could lend out his own ability to borrow Nazelli and Ferrero's investments in trust. The chain of associations could be stretched further:

> The carrier of this letter is our Gio Battista Usodimare Maggiolo who passes by on this galley on route to Palermo on his own business and since he might be able to conduct some business there for Palermo or might have other needs when he requests it you will pay him up to 1,000 ducats making the debt out to Cibo and Usodimare of Palermo, valuing it according to the order given in person by said Gio Battista because no matter what happens the debt extended will be paid. Farewell.[13]

Antonio was able to set up his cousin, Gio Battista Usodimare Maggiolo, and his sister's husband, Giulio Cibo Sale (whose wool dealings are described below), with an efficient agent in Naples. Nazelli and Ferrero were willing to execute an order, not from Antonio, but from two unknowns, because Antonio was willing to guarantee it informally, "since no matter what happens the debt will be paid," and because it represented a new conduit for capital and effort to Palermo, Leghorn, Florence, and other useful points north. Although the relationships were expressed in currency and commodities, there is little doubt what was really being traded: trust was transferable and rentable. It flowed easily between acquaintances and allowed complete strangers to associate and interact.

No one, not even the Brignole and their allies with their growing success, influence, and wealth, could conduct mercantile activity alone. Genoese commerce was conducted within a community of merchants constantly searching for temporary complements and synergies. That community was far looser than previously assumed. Trust could be maintained from deal to deal. Genoese merchants did not jump into unmediated high-value exchanges with strangers. Unlike the Venetians they did not have the

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[13] ASCG-BS 102, pp. 134-35.

opportunities of government subsidized trust in the form of state-run insurance and state-run convoys of ships that enforced extremely tenuous connections between traders. They did not, on the other hand, try to incorporate all of their agents into their coalitions.

Alongside their traffic in raw silk, oil, and light cloth, Nazelli and Ferrero specialized in connections to credits throughout Calabria and Sicily that could be brought to bear on purchases for traders like the Brignole. One needed only pay Nazelli and Ferrero in Genoa, who, by selling their own credits, moved capital northward, reinvesting it when convenient, turning it into cash when not. Nazelli and Ferrero rented their efforts, associations, and trust-investments in exchange for transfers of funds. Some of their associations in Naples and the *Mezzogiorno* were the short-term and weak connections with their own customers; others were strong relationships from within their own coalition. They solicited their own debtors and exploited their own trust relationships on behalf of the Brignole and other merchants. Within limits, traders like the Brignole and Nazelli and Ferrero could shift between traders and agents without fear of retribution or moral hazard. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Spanish wool business.

At first glance the Brignole and their allies in the Spanish wool trade, the Sale, seem to have had a rather large group of agents doing their bidding in Spain. Their agents were, however, independent, and had relationships with the Brignole similar to that of Nazelli and Ferrero. The scale of their operations in Spain dwarfed that of Naples, both in numbers of agents and in volume of business done, but this did not mean that the relationships were any more complex. The Brignole also worked from commission to commission with their agents in Spain. Typically, there were two different types of arrangements, occasional commissions and joint ventures, signaled by the phrases "*impietate il procevuto in,*" to employ the proceeds in, and "*spettante a/2 a noi* " "half of the stock in the deal belonging to us."

In *Impietate il procevuto in*, the occasional commission, an agent bought a commodity, such as copper implements, velvet, or coral,,from the Brignole. The agent then sold the commodity in the local Spanish market, taking on local debtors. When the debt came due, occasionally he collected cash, but more often he connected the debtors with credits located where the Brignole wanted to buy other commodities, principally wool. When it came

time to invest the *utile* in wool the agent took a commission on the exchange, netting 3 2/3 percent on the transaction. For their 3 2/3 percent, the Brignole were able to access local buyers and sellers without investing trust with any of them, and without investing heavily in trust with their casual agent. In their dispatches, the Brignole repeatedly remind agents and partners of all stripes to trust well, *avertendo al ben fidar*. When the Brignole wrote to their agents to remind the agent that his debtors owed him money, message written in-between the lines, was that the agent also owed an debt of effort to the Brignole. The agent did not simply owe the Brignole money, he was also expected to invest that money on the Brignole's behalf. The agent was asked to extend the service for which he had already been paid:

> April 18 to Fornari of Toledo,
>
> Honored noble, we find your dear letter of the 8 of the past month in response to which we say that we wait for you to give service to our people in Seville when you have collected for our account as well as for our Mr. Giovanni and our Antonio [Brignole] and Bartolomeo [Coronata] since you sent someone specifically for the extinction [of the debt] and similarly for as much as you will collect pressuring the debtors to put an end to [the commissions] as soon as possible doing everything you can to follow the orders of our people in Seville according to the orders given to you as well as [to collect] our share...they will not go unsolicited at your end.[14]

Fornari owed an debt of effort to the Brignole. He had already made use of Brignole commodities, had sold them, and perhaps had collected enough of the resulting debts to have realized a profit for his labors. However, he still owed the Brignole. Although the purchase of commodities was the ultimate goal, the debt that Fonari had incurred in Toledo was more than a debt in goods. It was to be paid in some form, most likely wool, in Seville or wherever the order specified. Fornari owed the Brignole an amount wherever they were ordered to pay. The Brignole relied on the connections that enabled them to move capital to where it was needed, and they were willing to risk a finite amount of that capital

[14] ASCG-BS 102, pp. 135-36.

for this service. In this case, if Fornari had taken his profits by paying the debt through a remittance to the Brignole at the exchange fair, and against Brignole orders, he would not have been doing his job, and it would have constituted a violation of trust on his part.

The Brignole often had to cajole their short-term collaborators, "To Lomellini of Granada...as soon as it becomes possible send the completed account soliciting the mature debtors and those who are maturing doing everything to forward [funds] to our people in Seville according to the order already given advising of your success."[15] All of the short-term collaborators 'employing the proceeds' were asked to coordinate their debtors' payments with the needs of 'our men' in Seville, Teramo Brignole and Antonio Coronata of Seville.

> April 18 to Boggio and Pinello of Seville
> ...we are waiting for you to satisfy our agents there the *marvedis* 36,020 that you still owe us and we ask that you do this pleasure for us as soon as possible to annul our accounts if we are agreed, also since the ship never arrived in Cadiz which has caused no little anxiety here, we hope that it pleases God to liberate us from it soon, for our interests and in the worst case if God wants it to pass, you will remember to send the returns so we may be reimbursed by the insurance, Farewell.[16]

The Brignole had to encourage their agents to concentrate on the family business when it was successful, and especially when it was not. Pestering, cajoling, and leaning, collectively called "soliciting the debtors," they kept short-term agents on the jobs for which they had already been paid. Again, Antonio Brignole leaned on Fornari in Toledo:

> in the account of our Mr. Giovanni there are 4,305 marvedis that for a long time now remained in the account of your agent in Cuenca for which it needs to be said that [the efforts of] the man that you sent to Baeza have not borne any fruit at all in the extinction of

[15] ASCG-BS 102, p. 136.
[16] ASCG-BS 102, p. 139

> the debts which distresses us because since they were incurred in 1568 and in regard to the [wool] laundry things have been left for so long that we doubt that it is little hope without your usual diligence given to its collection and we believe similarly in regard to the sack of Calatrava [wool] that remains in Alicante, for which we desire an end. For similar pending ventures we beg you to procure an end, making the proceeds of what ever you collect available to our people in Seville or remitting them in the next [fair]...[17]

And Lomellini in Granada:

> ... not having received the [completed] account for the shearlings purchased and resold by you on our account...since you have finished selling the third [quality wool] from last year, solicit all of the debtors...[18]

Debts were not left alone to build up because they represented more than cash owed. Effort, service, and diligence, or the lack thereof, were signaled in the balance of an agent's account. [Our money, credited to you]...has not rendered any fruit...[the fact that you have done nothing] in the retiring of those debts...in truth displeases us." In most cases, there was no cash to be had from any debtor; payment was typically made in other commodities. An outstanding debt was a blockage, indicating a blockage in the system. The agent would have to be motivated to keep the firm's purchases, and therefore its capital, moving and circulating.

The second typical relationship that the Brignole conducted in Spain was a joint venture, characterized by the phrase *"spettante a/2 a noi,"* our one-half share. This type of contract derived from similar ventures that Giovanni Brignole directed in the velvet trade in Flanders. In this type of arrangement the agent usually supplied half, or another fractional part, of the capital, and was responsible for his share of the expenses, tariffs, and insurance for a venture. In return for foregoing the 3 2/3 percent commission the agent gained access to markets beyond his local reach and enjoyed sellers, shipping, and banking services, without paying the

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[17] ASCG-BS 102, pp. 136-37.
[18] ASCG-BS 102, p. 137.

commission called the *provigione.* The joint venture was still a casual business relationship; it could be suspended and restarted when conditions dictated, as seen above in the transaction with Alessandro Lercaro of Messina, and the risk of defection was the same.

The lower costs, and therefore higher profits possible for all parties, served as a robust incentive to cooperation, encouraging all partners in a joint venture to make a great effort to maintain those joint ventures season after season. It also encouraged commissioned agents to demonstrate that they were trustworthy and merited the increased risk involved in a promotion into a joint venture.. Both the joint venture partner and the commissioned agent were obligated to collect funds from debtors to fund the clients' capital needs. In addition, the partner in a joint venture also needed to supply his own capital for one half of the venture. The joint venture meant that all of the parties-- buyer, shipper, seller, and bank --were all working for themselves as they worked for their partners. Past experience with less complex and risky, and therefore less profitable, ventures allowed each partner to gauge the others' proclivity to reciprocate and cooperate, and to assess whether a prospective partner had the cash, connections, and savvy to be worth the increased risk, in conditions of incomplete enforcement.

> April 23, copy sent, to Antonio Pallavicino Coronata in Seville. We find your dearest letter of the 19 of March, in response to which, affirming what we have already written in regard to the errors found in the wool accounts it remains to be said that the unpacking of the [bales] from Ferruffino and in regard to the sad assortment therein, in our view they are of little use since so much of this wool is a bad sort. It is not for this reason that we advise him of the way he had done this [since] we doubt that he will repurchase them, if this turns out all right then we would do well to give over the proceeds to God's account because this year there is nothing else to do since Ferrufino is running the *Lavadero.* Do not hesitate to send another trusted person to look after our interests pleading you to do everything to expedite said *Lavadero* sending the low grade wool as well as the high grade to the docks since

> they write from Florence that they can scrape more from the low grade here in Italy than you can there.[19]

The marketplace was far from a utopia, and traders sometimes tried to pass off inferior goods;. The error committed by Antonio Coronata Pallavicino did not result in his termination as agent. Antonio wrote that Ferruffino should be informed of their dissatisfaction, but that he doubted that Ferruffino would buy back the wool; even if he did, low prices would have meant selling at a loss. What remained was to remove the incompetent Ferruffino from running the Brignole's *lavadero,* where the wool was given a first wash, and ship the wool on to Florence, where a small profit was still possible:

> We were all pleased that you thought to wash [the wool there] in a convenient location for shipment to Alicante as well as to Cadiz. When you have the opportunity to do so if it seems that you should send it to Alicante it is better for everyone if it were sent to Cadiz and since a 1300 salme ship was leased for your associates here to pick up the majority of it in Cadiz. When you have exhausted this lease, lease more space without listing us as the addressee on our wool affirming everything as for your part. [20]

The most striking property of the joint-venture agent was his autonomy. Notwithstanding the intermittent quality of this type of association, the agent acted on his own, even while acting in concert with his other partners, in this case in Alicante, Genoa, and Florence. In the paragraph cited above, Antonio Brignole acknowledged Antonio Coronata's decisions to wash the partner's wool near to where it was sheared and to send it cleaned to Cadiz and Alicante. News of space for lease onboard a galleon stopping in Cadiz, together with a suggestion to send the remainder of their wool there, was sent with a reminder to address the wool as coming from a 'foreigner' and not by name for tax purposes. These are suggestions and not orders. When merchants gave orders, as Antonio had given to Nazelli and Ferrero in Naples, they were always explicit:

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[19] ASCG-BS 102, pp. 138-40
[20] ASCG-BS 102, pp. 138-40

> ...in regard to Granada nothing is happening save that we are anxious to know the amount of [next years' fleece] that Usodimare has reserved and that he has received the orders that you sent him. Since he has not heard otherwise from us he should send [our part from this year] here as he has already been ordered advising you this by this same courier we have written to Imperiale to send [our part] with the first secure vessel, on your judgment, seeing that it is not tatty and not of a lesser capacity than 2000 salme. Resell the insurance and invest it in the above said wool futures. When you have occasion for passage on a similar ship write us with the particulars of the shipment of the Serena [wool] you should resolve to send it to Alicante with orders for shipment to Leghorn as soon as possible conforming to the orders given to you by Cibo when they gave you this commission.[21]

Antonio Coronata was an agent as well as a joint partner. He executed simple orders: to reinvest insurance claims paid the previous year, to lease space on ships, and to gather and report information on futures purchased. He had collected his 3 2/3 percent commission on these simple tasks when money changed hands. Ultimately, the joint venture was the desired return for his continuing investment in trust, paid in installments of savvy and perseverance. Part of that trust was that the commission could be withdrawn without the relationship suffering ill effects:

> ...for the coming year, 1574, from our Nicolò and Giulio Cibo [Sale] you have been given a commission for 10,000 *rube* of wool, half of which will be the responsibility of you and your friends and half for us that is, our part will be one quarter and all will be sent on to Florence to the above said Cibo. When you can conclude this commission we will be satisfied with the said one quarter part in all you will serve the order of said Cibo. You will not be surprised by the low commission since we anticipate that prices will fall we

[21] ASCG-BS 102, pp. 138-40.

> do not want it to cost more. You will send notice of all changes day by day. Farewell.[22]

His payoff for diligently following shipping orders, channeling communiqués between agents, and pressuring debtors was participation in a joint venture involving eight to nine tons of wool. More casual agents invested the proceeds of goods sent to them for sale or from Brignole debtors with the *"solita diligenza,* the usual diligence," in return for 3 2/3 percent commissions. They were always looking to build their relationships from humble beginnings to participate with a number of merchants in far-off cities in mutually beneficial and complementary ventures.

Antonio Coronata purchased 10,000 *rube* of wool placing a deposit on flocks-- *incapperando*, wool 'futures' in the modern sense -- which he or his associate would inspect in the fields. The deposit gave them the right to buy the wool when sheared six months later. This was a difficult and time-consuming job. Although the distinction is lost on the modern reader, joint partners stressed the differences in wool from various regions. Granada, Toledo, Serena, and Cuenca rose and fell in esteem along with the weather, the condition of pasturage, and with the local money supply. One year futures in Serena would be dumped in favor for Cuenca but in another year Toledo would be dropped for Serena. Futures could be sold, or the traders might take delivery only to sell it in Alicante, where profits might suddenly evaporate due to the low quality or over-supply, of either wool or money.

The ability to have more casual business relationships, and to suspend them or restart them at will, was a fundamental feature of the wool business. The volume of the wool trade, and in the commodities trade in general, in the western Mediterranean, meant that the flexibility required by the Spanish market could not be supported by networks of kin or members of coalitions alone. No single coalition had the resources to station an employee or buy futures in all of the places that the ever-changing market conditions demanded. No joint-venture could honor its offers of commissions when profits from a certain region dried up. The range of relationships, from the most casual to those consecrated by marriage, was chosen in this context, and traders were ever mindful of these conditions. ..." As Antonio wrote to a transient

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[22] ASCG-BS 102, pp. 24-25.

agent in Seville, "You will not be surprised by the small commission because we anticipate that prices will fall..."[23]

The wool eventually went by galleon to Leghorn or Pisa to the Brignole's shipping agent Salvator Quaratesi. From there it travelled overland to Florence, where it was cleaned a second time, and it was sold by Antonio Brignole's brother-in-law, Giulio Cibo Sale. Giulio's role in Florence was similar to Antonio Coronata's; he maintained casual relationships with brokers and consumers of raw wool. Antonio Coronata traded his connections, effort, and savvy, for Giulio Sale's and Antonio Brignole's. Ideally, as in the case cited above, the agent in Spain reserved the right to buy the next year's fleece as the current year's bales were leaving port for Tuscany, while the proceeds of the last year's sales were returning to Spain, in the form of merchandise and remittances.

The letters contained in this small register reveal repeated but non-sequential joint ventures with a wide range of partners. Due to the vague agreements between the participants, which often did not become clear until the venture was reconciled and dissolved, it is difficult to see how anyone could sue if they thought they had been defrauded. There were so many traders that no one trader was ever assured a repeated venture with the same players. From the general pool, the Brignole mixed and matched partners whenever convenient. Since no trader could be assured of a repeated relationship, the threat of forfeiting future gains could not have been a significant barrier to fraud. Nor was the threat of damage to a trader's reputation a significant barrier. In the hundreds of letters in the Brignole archive, Antonio Brignole wrote to complain only to those who could directly influence an outcome, and in those cases, only gingerly. In no letter, did any trader seek to dissuade another from a potential joint venture.

The reassurances that made trust possible in sixteenth-century Mediterranean trade were far weaker than generally assumed. While strong bonds of kinship or matrimony were useful to long-distance trade in the sixteenth century, by the second half of the century they were no longer central in commercial ventures. In any given season, Genoese merchants active in the western basin of the Mediterranean conducted trade within a subset of active Genoese merchants. Each interacting merchant sought partners with complementary activities, in order to fill holes in their organizations. Contrary to common perceptions, merchants did not

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[23] ASCG-BS 102, pp. 24-25.

always seek to upgrade relationships and make them ever more intimate and allied. Connections were often maintained at weak levels, and this useful characteristic of Genoese commercial networks was deliberately preserved to allow for maximum flexibility. No trader relied on repeated exchanges with another specific coalition of traders, but he always relied on future exchanges within a broader group of active merchants. The weaker arrangement could take actions that strong family ties could not. If it was inconvenient to continue in a relationship in any given year, the merchant could decline to give contracts until it became convenient again. The merchant could then call upon the investment in trust that he had made with the agent. The language of trust, and the potential future dealings it communicated, meant that he did not have to start over from scratch.

This characteristic of the Genoese network meant that there was no formal or informal institution that effectively transmitted the reputation of each trader to the whole group. Each trader had to manage his own joint ventures and the levels of trust within each venture. Ironically, weaker relationships helped them to do just that, enabling traders to enter into joint ventures without knowing any specific information about any trader beyond their own limited personal experience and without a guarantee of future repeated exchanges, long assumed to be necessary to the preservation of trust.

The Mystic Hordes of Memory: How Thomas Nast went from Five Points to *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*

Fiona Galvin

Thomas Nast was born on September 27, 1840, in Landau, Bavaria. By 1855, he was a full-time employee of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*. This job, his first, launched a career which would become legendary, and would profoundly shape American politics in the nineteenth century. Yet little is known about the youth of this influential and complicated artist.

Understanding Nast's life and work requires examining how he became an artist, how he joined the ranks of journalists as a newspaper illustrator, and how he interpreted his entry into professional life. Yet describing that entry is difficult. The difficulty arises because Nast's version of his youth is incomplete. It tells a simple story of the rise of an immigrant boy, emphasizing talent, luck, and the kindness of strangers. Nast hardly mentioned the dislocation, confusion, and tension caused by emigration and arrival in a new land, and he romanticized his family history. In order fully to understand his life it is necessary to fill in the blanks in Nast's story, to examine not only the history to which he admitted, but also that which he omitted. This includes a much more detailed examination of the people and places Nast encountered as a child, and of the little known about his family life.

This essay begins by presenting Nast's youth as he described it to his biographer. The account is simplistic, shallow, and rosy. A fuller picture emerges with an examination of Nast's neighborhood. Finally, Nast's entry into illustrated journalism is probed. What emerges is a tale very different from Nast's. In this version, the life of the streets was central to his success, and the immigrant experience was as ugly as it was hopeful. Moreover, Nast's youth suggests two important points about historical

memory. First, it is not enough to acknowledge that people re-tell their life stories. Rather, historians should see the act of re-telling as an imaginative one. Subjects add to and erase from their history in order to present a particular personal image to the world. They comment on the past by admitted to and denying it. Second, the nuts and bolts of history and the subjective elements of it can be merged by comparing personal histories to bare facts. The contrast between historical reality and the memory of historical figures can illuminate much about the reliability of testamentary evidence and the practical reality of broad concepts.

The Story as Nast Told It

Albert Bigelow Paine published his biography of Thomas Nast in 1904.[1] It was the outgrowth of a series of conversations between Paine and Nast begun several years before at the Player's Club, a Manhattan gentleman's club. The two men, Paine forty-one years old to Nast's sixty, met when Paine provided Nast with a copy of his first book. Nast complimented the novel and invited Paine to join him before the fire, where the two enjoyed a long talk. Paine had been an admirer of Nast's since childhood, and the cartoonist was pleased by his enthusiastic praise. Nast asked whether Paine would agree to write his biography, and Paine agreed.[2] Based on this conversation, Paine began to meet with Nast, examine his papers, and compile information about his life. Many of the stories in Paine's earliest chapters are memories found nowhere in Nast's extant papers, and their tone and pacing suggests a conversation rather than a documentary source. Paine used no footnotes, so

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[1] Albert Bigelow Paine, *Thomas Nast: His Period and His Pictures* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1904).

[2] Paine's account of this chat appears on pp. 1-4. His biography of Nast was Paine's first in what would become a distinguished career as a biographer, essayist, novelist and editor. Other biographies by Paine include: *Mark Twain, A Biography* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912); *The Girl in White Armor: The Story of Joan of Arc* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1927, reprinted 1929, 1948, 1955, 1960, 1964, 1967, 1990); *Life and Lillian Gish* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1932); *Theodore N. Vail, A Biography* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1929); *Captain Bill McDonald, Texas Ranger, A Story of Frontier Reform* (New York: J.J. Little & Ives Co., 1909); and *A Sailor of Fortune, Personal Memoirs of Captain B.S. Osbon* (New York: McClure, Phillips and Co., 1906) this volume is also listed as the work of Osbon, so authorship is unclear. Paine expanded his biography of Twain in later years, creating a children's biography of Twain and editing Twain's letters and autobiography for publication. A more detailed discussion of Paine and Nast's first meeting, and the significance of Nast's biography for Paine's career, appears in the Conclusion.

determining the source of many of his quotes is impossible, but a reader can hardly help forming the impression that much of the material on Nast's childhood came directly from the artist. In addition, the small number of printed interviews and biographical sketches published during Nast's lifetime are consistent with the facts as they appear in Paine's book, but lack the detail provided by Paine. Virtually the only information available regarding Nast's first fifteen years appears in the 1904 biography.[3] In this essay, Nast's voice emerges through Paine's text, and it is this which is presented as his version of events.

Thomas Nast was the last child of Appolonia Abriss and Joseph Thomas Nast.[4] Information about his family is difficult to find, but a few facts are known. Nast was the only boy in his family when he was born, but there apparently had been two older brothers, both of whom were dead. Visits to their graves lingered in Nast's memory enough for him to mention the smell of the box hedges (planted to outline each grave) to Paine almost 60 years later.[5] A surviving older sister is the only sibling Nast mentions, although no mention of her survives past their childhood.[6]

Nast's father played the trombone for the Landau based Ninth Regimental Bavarian Band. Many of the memories Nast provided to Paine at the turn of the century reflect an early childhood of great warmth and pleasure. In recognition of the toy soldiers Nast fashioned from his mother's wax, women in apartments upstairs would lower cookies to him on a string. At Christmas, a kindly, bearded gentleman in a fur coat would play the part of Pelze-Nicol, or St. Nicholas, walking from door to door distributing sweets to children. Nast's memories of Landau all seem to have been suffused with a sense of dreamy nostalgia. However, not all of

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[3] For example, "Caricaturists" in the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, Sunday December 11, 1887; "Caricature in the United States," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, pp. 25-42; and "American Caricaturists," unknown publication, in the collection of the Morristown Free Public Library, Nast folder. In 1976, Draper Hill, whose biography of James Gillray is the definitive work on that cartoonist, began to write a biography of Thomas Nast It has never been finished, but in an unpublished chapter, Hill repeats some of Paine's details, along with confirming material from James Parton. Draper Hill, "Tommy on Top," pp. 88-90, in the collection of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library and Center, Thomas Nast collection (GA-33), box 1.

[4] Alice Caulkins, "Thomas Nast: A Chronology," *The Journal of the Thomas Nast Society*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1996): pp. 119-123.

[5] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p 6.

[6] The last reference to Nast's birth family in the Paine biography appears on page 68 Nast's sister is mentioned only in the very beginning of the book, on page 5.

Nast's childhood experiences could have been so positive. In 1846, political uncertainty in Bavaria intruded on the Nasts when Joseph Thomas Nast was warned by his commanding officer that he should leave the area before his politics caused trouble. Bavaria, like many other German principalities and European states, was engaged in a struggle between a highly educated, politically liberal reform movement and the entrenched power of the aristocracy and military. These tensions would erupt in revolution all across Europe in 1848, and Joseph Nast's political beliefs, too freely expressed for safety, were a problem. In response to a warning from his superior officer Joseph Nast left Landau to work on an American merchant marine vessel.[7] Appolonia Nast, Thomas and his sister departed for Paris, where they found places on a ship bound for New York. [8]

Despite a bout with what may have been malaria, Thomas Nast weathered his trans-Atlantic voyage well, arriving at the Verrazano Narrows in mid-summer. His first view of New York was impressive enough to prompt the six year old Nast to comment that

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[7] It is unclear exactly what Joseph Nast's role on this vessel was. He may have signed on as a member of the ship's band, or as a single musician. It is also possible that he was a crewman, although nothing in Nast's surviving papers suggests that his father had any experience at sea. He could have been a passenger, but the fact that he left in 1846 and only arrived in New York in 1850 casts doubt on this option.

[8] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 13; W.G. Rogers asserts that the senior Nast came to American first and then sent for his wife and children. It is possible that in his travels at sea Nast, Sr., briefly visited New York, or stopped there long enough to determine whether his wife could emigrate safely, but Paine is clear that he did not live with the family until 1850. No other source supports Rogers, who provides no citation. W.G. Rogers, *Mightier Than the Sword: Cartoon, Caricature, Social Comment* (Harcourt, Brace & World: New York, 1969), p. 178. Al Boime, writing about Nast's connection to French art, notes that German sources have identified a slightly different possible itinerary for Joseph Thomas Nast. In this version, Joseph Thomas Nast deserted from an army musical tour, directing Apollonia Nast to take the two children and travel to New York, where he would meet them. A second version presented by Boime is that Joseph Thomas Nast obtained a release from the army after arranging for another man to take his place. He then emigrated with the family. Boime concludes, however, based in part on the clarity of Nast's recollection of Joseph Thomas Nast's return to the family in 1850, that the most likely story is that Nast, his mother and sister traveled alone in 1846 with Joseph Thomas Nast joining them later after a journey which probably included service on an American merchant marine vessel. See Al Boime, "Thomas Nast and French Art," in *The American Art Journal*, vol. IV, no. 1 (Spring 1872): 44, f. 11. Puran Singh Khalsa repeats the same sequence, citing Boime. Puran Singh Khalsa, "Thomas Nast and *Harper's Weekly*: 1862-1886," (Ph.D. diss, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1983). Further discussion of the Revolutions of 1848 occurs in section two of this essay.

he was "glad he came."[9] Appolonia Nast found her family a home on Greenwich Street, on the west side of Manhattan Island, and enrolled Nast in an English-speaking primary school.[10] Unable to understand the language, Nast found the experience terribly confusing. He remembered other children "mischievously" directing him hither and thither, including a boy who sent Nast to line up with other children who were about to be spanked. Nast was unable to explain himself and thus could not evade the punishment he had not earned. Rushing home at lunch, he refused to return to school. Mrs. Nast, hoping to find a more congenial place for her family, moved east to William Street, in what Paine identifies as a German-speaking neighborhood.[11]

At his new school, Nast could speak German with students and teachers. Even so, he concentrated more on drawing than on academics, using crayons given to him by a neighbor. Not only did he draw at school - his "desk ... was full of his efforts and the walls of the ... house on William Street were decorated with his masterpieces" - Nast pursued opportunities to draw throughout the city.[12] His favorite subjects were fires, and he often chased the engines of Company Six, when they left the station to fight a fire.[13] As a result of his disinterest, Nast was never academically accomplished.

Nast's family re-formed in 1850, when Joseph Nast finally returned from the sea. He found work with the Philharmonic Society and the band at Burton's Theatre. Thomas went with his father sometimes, drawing the band in his sketchbook. His

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[9] Paine, *Thomas Nast,* p. 8. Paine notes that the wife of the ship's captain treated Nast with "wine and quinine," suggesting malaria. There is no evidence that Nast suffered the recurring fevers of some malaria patients, however, so it is possible that he simply had a fever and the lady gave him the medicine she had on hand.

[10] Caulkins, "Thomas Nast: A Chronology," p. 119.

[11] The ethnic complexity of this neighborhood is discussed at some length in section two of this essay. German-speaking residents were plentiful, however, so Paine's description, while accurate as far as it went, was demonstrably incomplete.

[12] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 13.

[13] Company Six was the company of William M. Tweed, later called "Boss" Tweed. Its truck was decorated with the head of a tiger, a symbol Tweed suggested and which Tweed later adapted as the symbol of Tammany Hall. Thus Nast, who chased the tiger-headed truck as a child, would later adapt the tiger as a symbol of the corruption, greed, and violence of both Tweed and Tammany Hall. The gritty character of Nast's neighborhood and his fascination with the fire company is discussed later in this essay, as is his connection to Tweed. Paine, *Thomas Nast*, pp. 12-14 on Nast chasing fire engines from Company Six; and William Alan Bales, *Tiger in the Streets*, (Dodd, Mead: New York, 1962), p. 28, 33, 45 regarding Tweed.

sketchbook seems to have been the only object of much interest to Nast in this period. Although he attended two German-speaking schools and an "academy" on Forty-Seventh Street, none could hold him for long. Nast's parents hoped that he could become a better student, but their hopes were eternally frustrated. By 1854 Nast had convinced his parents that art was the only path for him.[14]

From this point on Nast studied drawing and painting. His first formal training was with Theodore Kaufmann, a German-American painter who taught young artists in his studio on Broadway. Paine implies that Kaufman took Nast as a pupil in part because of their shared German heritage. Although the German immigrant community in New York was large, widely distributed and constantly shifting, it was cohesive enough to support German-speaking schools and churches, bars and newspapers.[15] These community organs suggest that Nast's parents may have hoped for a friendly reception for their talented son. All his life, Nast struggled to be punctual, civil, and focused, but there is no mention of these challenges with regard to his study with Kauffman, who became Nast's first mentor. Rather than a struggle, artistic study seems to have been pure pleasure for Nast. Kauffman taught Nast to copy great works in local museums and drew from life in the studio, and he seems to have made a few friends in the artistic

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[14] Given his lack of formal education, it is no surprise that Nast never became a highly literary person. The English language would pose a continuing challenge, even in correspondence. Writing in his terrible handwriting, he often made spelling and grammar errors. He was especially prone to spelling phonetically and to omitting words, such as in his 1863 letter to his wife, Sallie, written from a train. "I feel rather emty and think with pleasure that in a few minnits I will my lunch." After his marriage, Nast increasingly relied on Sallie to write his letters, and her elegant handwriting is much more common in Nast papers than Nast's own. That Nast knew his written English was poor – and that Sallie found his struggle to express himself endearing - is apparent in the same 1863 letter, in which he writes that "I know you love my mistake, and so I do not care." See Thomas Nast to Sallie Edwards Nast, July 1, 1863, Huntington Manuscript #27750.

[15] See Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience* (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2000), pp. 191-3, 397-8. German newspapers were numerous, but the most famous was the *New Yorker Staatszeitung*, published in New York by Oswald Ottendorfer and primarily concerned with neighborhood news, city and national politics. Other German cultural landmarks included the *Stadttheater*, which presented plays and concerts in German under German management, and the Amerikanscher Arbeiterbund, a German tradesmen's union, which met in Mechanic's Hall. Beer halls and German businesses were sprinkled all over the city, especially in Kleindeutschland, in the 10th, 11th, and 13th Wards, somewhat uptown from the Nast's neighborhood. See Howard B. Furer, *The Germans In America* (New York: Oceana Publishing, Dobbs Ferry, 1973), pp. 39-43.

community there. He was learning techniques for drawing, painting, and composition from peers, masters, and the simple repetition of studio work.[16]

Lessons with Kauffman alone did not satisfy Nast for long, however. Like many artists, he sought training in a variety of venues. He moved on, first to other mentors, then to classes at the Academy of Design on Thirteenth Street.[17] As part of his training, he and other students visited local museums and galleries, copying the paintings hanging there. Nast especially liked the paintings in the collection of Thomas Bryan, a wealthy New Yorker. Copying the works on his easel, Nast attracted admiring attention. Bryan noticed the young artist, and helped Nast earn pocket money by allowing him to collect the entrance fees of visitors. Nast enjoyed his training at the Academy, and his sideline at the museum was lucrative, but he sought a more permanent position with a steadier income and new artistic challenges.[18]

Nast's attention was captured by a new form of journalism, illustrated weeklies. These were like newspapers in their content and appearance, but they differed from newspapers in a few respects. First, they relied directly on illustration to supplement written content. Second, illustrated weeklies included fiction and poetry in addition to news. Finally, like magazines, the new weeklies were created to serve purposes other than disposable news delivery. For example, they frequently printed drawings, lithographs, and engravings which were intended for display on the

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[16] Some of these artists included Samuel Coleman, Eugene Benson, and Walter Shirlaw. According to the Census of 1855, there were 898 artists working in New York City, of whom 211 were German immigrants. Of the total, 589 were foreign-born. Thus, the artistic community into which Nast stepped was a fairly cosy one, and one in which a substantial majority shared Nast's immigrant past. See Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1949), pp. 214-215, Table 27.

[17] The National Academy of Design, founded in 1825, was a group of distinguished artists who pooled both their art and resources to create an American version of the English and French academies. These were schools where students could learn what was called the "academic" style of painting, and which presented new work by established and rising artists in annual exhibitions. Artists could be elected to membership, usually once they had achieved distinction in the field, and students like Nast could apply to become pupils of the Academy's school. See Cummings, Thomas S., *Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1865) and Clark, Eliot, *History of the National Academy of Design, 1825-1953* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).

[18] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, pp. 16-17. Other possible reasons for Nast's search for employment are discussed later in this essay.

walls of readers' homes, similar to today's poster art.[19] Nevertheless, illustrated newspapers and magazines were directly concerned with news, and they printed sensational stories alongside domestic and foreign political affairs. Because of this ambiguity, and because contemporaries used the two terms interchangeably, the words magazine and newspaper will be applied as synonyms in reference to illustrated periodicals in this essay.

The first illustrated weekly newspapers, founded in 1851, were *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion* and the *Illustrated American News*. Four years later, Gleason's employee Frank Leslie (born Henry Carter) started his paper, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*, on December 15, 1855.[20] Leslie's was to become an intensely popular paper, with circulation of 160,000 in 1860 and a sixty-year lifespan. It was only matched by *Harper's Weekly*, founded in 1857. However, when Nast noticed *Leslie's*, it was still brand-new, competing in an environment of cut-throat competition. *Leslie's Illustrated News* sold for ten cents, contained a variety of materials, and relied directly on illustration for its sensational content.[21] Readers devoured the illustrations of city fires, scenes of local life, and portraits of dignitaries.

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[19] The use of printed images in private homes is well-known, but illustrated newspapers were printed on fairly inexpensive paper, in comparison to the high quality of Currier and Ives prints. It is initially difficult to imagine it surviving the process of cutting, pasting, and the rigors of nineteenth century life. Readers nonetheless cut out drawings they liked and pasted them up. Frank Leslie even made special accommodations for this, by warning readers to examine the paper thoroughly before cutting in order to catch any important text (which might be on the back of a picture and thus lost if it was cut out too soon), and by usually printing "stories and miscellaneous materials" on the back page of an illustration. See Budd Gambee, *Frank Leslie and His Illustrated Newspaper* (Ann Arbor, Michigan:Department of Library Science, University of Michigan, 1964), p. 50.

[20]Frank Luther Mott, *History of American Magazines*, Vol. 2, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 44. Budd Gambee's dissertation, later published as a book with most of its chapters excerpted (see note 19), provides a short biography of Leslie in pp. 39. Leslie, born in England, was raised in a solidly middle-class family. He was expected to follow in his father's footsteps, becoming a merchant, but essentially ran away to be an artist. His rebellion coincided with the rise of illustrated journalism in London, and he joined the staff of the *London Illustrated News*. From there, in 1853, he made his way to America. His artistic pseudonym at the *London Illustrated News* was "Frank Leslie," and when he emigrated he made it his legal name, plastering it onto each of his papers.

[21] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, Vol. 2, 453. Gambee, p. 4, suggests that Leslie didn't intend his paper to be "sensational" in a prurient sense, like the Penny Press, but that his personality lent itself to coverage of what we now call human interest, and he learned early that crime stories were hot sellers. It must have been

Leslie's employed two kinds of men to create illustrations: artists and engravers. First, the artist would draw the scene, either from life or memory. Then, provided with the sketch, an engraver (or, later, a team of engravers) would carve the drawing onto a block of soft wood. This carved wood was used to print the illustration, and the skill required to carve it was substantial. Illustrations, then, were the product of a physical and creative interaction between artists and engravers. Both brought specialized skills to the print room. Frank Leslie, his newspaper growing constantly, was ever in need of talented young men to create illustrations for the paper. He recruited them from other periodicals, sought them among local artists, and hired them when they appeared on his doorstep. In 1855, Thomas Nast became one of those men, at the tender age of fifteen.

Even at the end of his life, Nast was proud of the way he talked his way into the job with Leslie. He simply presented himself to the owner, offered sample drawings to demonstrate his talent, and insisted on a job. Leslie hesitated, but allowed Nast to take on a trial assignment: drawing a ferry on a busy morning. James Parton, a historian and a cousin of Nast's wife, told Paine that Leslie never intended to hire Nast. Leslie told Parton that he "gave him the job merely for the purpose of bringing home to his youthful mind the absurdity of his application." Nast, however, surprised the editor, producing an excellent drawing with energy, exactitude, and engaging detail. Like most of the editors of his generation, Leslie was a man whose primary concern was profit. Recognizing Nast's talent, and unconcerned with his age, Leslie gave Nast a job immediately, paying four dollars a week.[22]

With the job at *Leslie's,* Nast's childhood effectively ended. He would remain employed full time from 1855 until he left *Harper's Weekly* in 1887. It is here, then, that we can pause to examine

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early, indeed, as the second issue of the paper, January 5, 1856, contained the following headlines: "A Female Found Dead," "Accidental Death," "Suicide of an Artist," "Christmas at Five Points," "Diabolic Murder in New Haven," and "Juvenile Fracas."

[22] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, pp. 18-19. According to Gambee, Frank Leslie got his first job in almost exactly the same way as Nast. Although at the time Leslie was an adult, he apparently talked his way into a job with almost no qualifications save talent and ambition. Paine does not mention this, and perhaps didn't know it. Alternatively, Paine may be silent because Nast tended to emphasize his work for *Harper's Weekly*, rather than *Frank Leslie's*. But it suggests that Leslie might have been more sympathetic to the young German applicant than he admitted to James Parton.

critically the themes of Nast's version of his early life and its omissions. These themes are connected, and they are suggestive of some of the contradictions in his later work. Emphasized most powerfully are a set of ideals which Nast believed to be at the heart of the American Dream. Secondarily, a romanticized version of Nast's immigrant community and his family undergird his narrative. Finally, the glaring omission of any open discussion of his family's religious faith and the ethnic content of his childhood neighborhood point toward the complexity of his later views regarding many ethnic, religious, and political groups.

For Nast, the American Dream was a tangible fact, not an interpretative framework. As his artwork was to make clear, he believed quite literally that an American had freedoms and opportunities denied to the vast majority of the world. He would have defined the American Dream with reference to these opportunities, much as he defined his own narrative by emphasizing them. The story of his childhood points directly to the possibilities available to immigrant children. Two examples illustrate this point. First, there is the question of Nast's literacy. He stated outright that he could speak no English when he arrived. Although his mother transferred young Nast into a German-speaking school, he never thrived academically. Rather than interpret this in negative terms – as confusing, frustrating, or limiting – Nast chose to emphasize instead his artistic talent. School was irrelevant, in this reading, because what mattered was Nast's ability to transform the vibrancy of the city around him into beautiful, commercially useful illustrations. Second, the confusion of the streets around him was made not threatening but exciting, not dangerous but stimulating. The scenes he witnessed on the street provided Nast the raw material necessary for any artist. The second section of this essay examines the reality of Nast's neighborhood, but what matters here is the optimistic approach Nast took to it in his memory. Rather than the scene of poverty, crime, and violence that it often was, he remembered it as the rich vein of experience from which he could draw to advance his own interests. Specifically, his practice of following fire wagons points to this interpretation, because rather than remembering the devastation of fire in a neighborhood of wooden homes, Nast recalled the excitement of running after the wagons, the heroism of the firemen, and the pleasure of creating drawings of their

exploits.[23] Clearly, a powerful sense of opportunity and optimism suffused Nast's personal narrative. It was central to how he understood his own childhood, and how he explained his rise from obscurity to fame and wealth.

By emphasizing the opportunity available in America, Nast did not completely erase his own immigrant experience. Instead, he controlled it by romanticizing it. The fears we can imagine accompanying a new school, a foreign language, and a new group of classmates were managed by telling the amusing story of Nast's undeserved spanking. The classic immigrant problem of housing – overcrowding, dirt, danger from the environment and one's neighbors – was retold as an exciting environment full of kindly strangers. Nast left out his immediate neighbors in favor of emphasizing his relationships with prominent German artists like Theodore Kaufman. Likewise, he chose not to remember the angry clashes between immigrants and "native" Americans, emphasizing instead his role as protégé to the wealthy art collector Thomas Bryan. To be a German immigrant was to buy German cakes at the corner store, to attend a German school, and to apprentice with a German master artist. This romantic memory re-wrote Nast's familial situation, as well. The absence of Nast's father seems to have been hardly any trouble at all, and his return is couched in terms which elide any dislocation, resentment, or confusion. The frustration Nast's parents must have felt with his failure at school was explained away almost humorously, with the Nast parents simply capitulating to Thomas's artistic interests.[24] Any hint of tension, poverty, or obstruction of Nast's artistic destiny was erased. For a reader of Paine's biography, this might be less obvious if Nast's family made any appearance in his later life. After his marriage in 1861, however, they simply disappear from the story, never to be seen again. Nast's father's death in 1858 or

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[23] Buildings in Lower Manhattan, where William Street crosses through the Wall Street neighborhood and almost reaches the Lower East Side, burned repeatedly. In 1776, a great fire burned most of Broadway. In 1835, a huge fire burned much of the financial district and Ward 3. Lower Greenwich Street was rebuilt as a warehouse district after the fire, helping us to determine that Nast and his family must have lived in the upper reaches of the street, which remained residential longer. In 1845, just a year before Nast's arrival, a fire burned through Wall Street, Water, Street, and most of the eastern tip of the island (Ward 2), including the southernmost tip of William Street. Had Nast walked three or four blocks south on his own street, he would have encountered rebuilding made necessary by the devastation of fire in a city built largely in wood. Eric Homberger, *The Historical Atlas of New York City* (New York: H. Holt & Co. 1994), pp. 56, 78-79.

[24] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 15.

1859 is mentioned but merits no comment, and even in Nast's personal papers, there is almost no mention of any family member for the rest of his life.[25] The contrast between his idyllic description of his childhood and this erasure is intriguing, but unexplained.[26]

This romantic view of life as an immigrant, both in relation to the community as a whole and to his own family, is nothing new. One reason that biographies and autobiographies are often suspect as historical evidence is that they tend to emphasize success and reward rather than failure and want. But for artists, self-presentation, even in the suspect medium of auto/biography, is an important component of artistic vision. Art is usually interpreted both on its own terms and in relation to the perspective of the artist as a human being and a citizen.[27] In Nast's case, this points to the most glaring omission of his narrative: religion. Later in Nast's

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[25] A photocopied newspaper article in the collection of Nast materials at the Morristown Free Public Library states that the Nast family intended to live in New York City but "ultimately, this plan was changed and a home was made in the middle West." This is the only reference to the Nast family in later years, and it is incomplete in that no newspaper is identified and no date is given. In the spring of 1860, while in England, Nast repaid a loan by the boxer John Heenan by giving him a draft for $100 on Nast's mother. This was in case the *New York Illustrated News* failed to pay Heenan money it owed Nast. Heenan tore up the draft, but the story indicates that not only was Nast's mother still in New York at that time, she was in possession of his savings or of family money on which Nast felt he could draw. See Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 44. In an 1860 diary kept while touring Germany, Nast describes his visits with family members in Landau. Nast seems to have been hoping that an elderly aunt would make him her heir. He was unsure, however, that she actually had any money, or if she did how much. In the end, he found that the endless round of afternoon visits and beer hall nights was tedious, and he moved on. The only hint that his emotions were engaged was in his visit to his father's old band hall, where he was moved to think that his father had walked through the same gates. Diary in the collection of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library, GA-33-TN, Box 1 "Diaries" file, see entries for December 21 through December 24, 1860.

[26] Sociologists who embrace biography, or "life stories," as a methodology point to the problem of internal consistency as one which indicates "tension of change in interpretation." Thus an inconsistency, which might be interpreted as a lapse in autobiographical or biographical narrative, becomes a source of insight into the re-telling of the subject's story. The absence of any information regarding Nast's family, either from Paine, Nast, or any other source, is both frustrating and suggestive. See Brian Roberts, *Biographical Research* (Buckingham, England: Open University Press, 2002), p. 40.

[27] For examples of this tendency, see Draper Hill, *Mr. Gillray: The Caricaturist* (London: Phaidon Press, 1965); Stanley Wintraub, *Whistler, A Biography* (New York:DaCapo Press, 1974); Silverberg, Miriam, *Van Gogh and Gauguin: the Search for Sacred Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000).

life, religion became vitally important, especially to his attacks on Irish immigrants and Roman Catholics of all nationalities. To understand his drawings, and to interpret his opposition to Catholic Americans, it would be helpful to know Nast's religious history. There are two hints in Paine's account that suggest that the Nast family was Roman Catholic. First, an early anecdote Nast related to Paine includes a scene Nast observed while at Mass and, second, a later passage notes that Nast disliked German school because he was required to confess. He "regard[ed] his sins as too many and too dark for the confidences of the priest's box." Nast's rejection of the scholarship and discipline of school may also have manifested in his rejection of Catholic doctrine and practice. Paine relates a tale from 1850 in which Nast snuck out of church to cut an interesting poster off a nearby wall.[28] Nast's neighborhood, discussed in detail below, was a mixture of nationalities, religions and ethnicities, but the vast majority of his neighbors were Irish Catholics. If his own religion was the same as theirs, what was his contact with the Irish population? These are difficult questions to answer in light of the spotty evidence. If Nast's parents were Roman Catholic, and if Nast was raised in the church, he gave no sign of sympathy with it later in life.[29] His wife, Sallie, was Episcopalian, and her religious tradition seems to have prevailed in their home. Nast's attacks on Catholics, and the possible effect of his own early Catholicism on them, are subjects too complex for this essay. What suffices is the fact that two of the most personal aspects of his early life were ruthlessly minimized in his life story. What follows is a description of the neighborhood as we now know it to have been, and the picture is very different from the one Nast painted.

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[28] Paine, *Thomas Nast,* p. 6, writes that Nast observed a nasty incident "at a Catholic Church," but does not specify whether Nast was there as a congregant. On page 12 he relates the story of the poster on Sunday, and on page 14 the confessional story.

[29] Thomas Nast was not the first man of his name to achieve fame in the United States. Wilhelm Nast, a Methodist missionary and editor of a German-language Methodist newspaper, made a place for himself in America in the early nineteenth century. As far as I can determine, there is no relation between Wilhelm Nast and Thomas Nast. No reference to the elder exists in Nast's papers or in Paine, and I have seen no suggestion by any Nast scholar that the two might be related. There remains the possibility, however, that Thomas Nast was, in some way, related to Wilhelm, and therefore that the Nast family had some connection to early German Methodism. See Tolzmann, p. 229.

The Neighborhood

Emigration to the United States was often difficult and confusing. Settling into a new neighborhood, surrounded by unfamiliar languages and customs of every sort, could be even worse for a small boy. The two homes Nast occupied from 1846 until 1855 provide vivid examples of the dynamic environment into which he had been thrust. The first neighborhood, surrounding the Greenwich Street house, was somewhat genteel, but the Nasts occupied it for only a short time. The second, near the northern end of William Street, plunged Nast into a teeming jungle of crime, commerce, and colorful humanity. Surrounding William Street was a culture of immigrants: Irish, German, Italian, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant.

The first Nast home in New York is identified only as a house on Greenwich Street, which Paine says was lined with "respectable dwellings."[30] Greenwich Street is quite long, stretching from Second Place, almost at Manhattan's southern tip, all the way north to 14th Street, almost fifty blocks today. If one were to walk the street from its southern origin all the way to its terminus, one would pass through the Financial District, Battery Park City, TriBeCa, and the far western boundaries of Little Italy and SoHo, finally arriving in the West Village. Neither Nast nor Paine specified where along diverse Greenwich Street the Nasts settled. Given the fire of 1835, which burned much of lower Greenwich Street, and the rural nature of New York above Chambers Street, where City Hall is today, it seems likely that they found a house in the middle of Greenwich Street, closer to Wall Street than to the Battery.[31] Typical Greenwich Street homes, usually built of wood and standing a little more than two stories high, were disappearing in the 1840's. The advent of iron building materials, and the expanding wealth and commerce of the city, led to a building boom for warehouses and factories, many centered on Greenwich Street. The fire of 1835 had wiped out many of the residential buildings of this area, leading landowners to re-build larger and more commercially useful structures with newer materials. As a result, the Nasts likely found their new neighborhood rather unwelcoming for small children. The number of residential properties diminished with every year, and the streets were increasingly busy with horse-drawn traffic, both passenger and

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[30] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 9.

[31] Regarding the character of Greenwich Street and the fires of 1835 and 1845, see Homberger, p. 78.

freight. Nast explained their move to William Street partially in terms of his mother's search for a German language school, but it may also have related to this tension between the older nature of the Greenwich Street neighborhood and its growing commercial atmosphere.[32]

A second possibility for the residence at Greenwich Street is suggested by Howard B. Furer in his book on German America. In the 1850s, Germans established boardinghouses on Greenwich Street. Here, poor or destitute immigrants sought temporary housing while they found work. It is possible that Mrs. Nast moved her family into an earlier version of these boardinghouses, which would explain the move to William Street. However, there are reasons to think this unlikely. First, Paine clearly implies that Appolonia Nast obtained a house, and that the area was more genteel than poor. However, he makes the same claim about William Street, with only partial accuracy. Second, it is unclear exactly when these boardinghouses appeared, but they may not have been available on Greenwich Street in the 1840s, when German immigration was considerably slower than in the late forties and early 1850s. Because of the rapid change in the street, its residential spaces may still have been single family occupied when Mrs. Nast arrived. Finally, the fact that Thomas Nast was placed in school immediately suggests that Mrs. Nast was prepared to settle permanently on Greenwich Street, something that is not consistent with life in a boardinghouse. Overall, it seems more likely that she moved into a small home and then sought a new one when the school and street proved unsatisfactory.[33]

William Street, by contrast, was a genial mix of residential, artisanal, and small industrial use.[34] Paine says that the Nasts found a house on William Street near Frankfort, a cross-town artery now

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[32] Homberger, *Historical Atlas,* pp. 70-81, and for Nast's version of the move, Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 10.

[33] Furer, *The Germans In America,* p. 42.

[34] For example, Nast identified the man next door as a crayon-maker for artists (p. 10), and an engraving at the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) shows a window shade maker in this area. Also at the MCNY, an engraving shows a row of shops on William Street between Fulton and John Sts., in 1845. Here, we see shops selling "Paris Fancy Goods," "Saddlery Hardware," dry goods, a lamp manufacturer, and a paint store for artists. In the early nineteenth century, Delmonico's restaurant opened on William Street between Beaver Street and Mill Street. It burned in 1835, but was reconstructed and re-opened in 1837, where it remained until 1890. See Gayle, Margot, "New York's Changing Scene," in *Sunday News Magazine*, March 25, 1979, no page number, in the William Street file of the MCNY.

paralleling the Brooklyn Bridge.[35] William is one of the oldest streets in New York, formerly called Smith Street, and it stretches from South Street, along the East River, up to Beekman Street, ending in a "T" with Spruce Street.[36] Frankfort is one block north of Spruce, so we can assume that the Nast house would have been near the end of William Street, just southeast of Park Row, where City Hall now stands. Six blocks south was Wall Street, center of New York's financial district, and a few blocks north was Franklin Square, the center of newspaper production for the city.[37] Broadway, then as now one of the most important streets in the city, was two blocks west, and in either direction it offered a wealth of the city's most innovative delights, including shopping at the new "department" store.[38] The German artist Kauffman's studio was on Broadway, and the Academy of Design was at Thirteenth Street, just off Broadway. Most importantly, most threateningly, was the slum Five Points, which lurked one block west and five north, well within walking distance of a small boy.

It is unclear exactly when Nast moved to William Street, but Paine implied that it was soon after the family arrived in New York. He was certainly there when his father returned in 1850. The story of his father's return is useful to illustrate, in part, the way Nast edited his past for history. As Nast told the story, his mother

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[35] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 10.

[36] William Street actually had several informal names in addition to its final one. It began as Shoemaker's Lane, and was famous for the horrible smells caused in the tanning process. Later, it was called Smith Street, King George Street, and William Street, the last named for William III of England. In 1744 the street was officially named William Street to minimize confusion. See "New Doings in Shoemaker's Lane," a pamphlet of the National City Bank of New York, in the William Street file of the MCNY.

[37] Among the newspapers on Park Row, William Street, and in Franklin Square were the *Staats-Zeitung und Herald*, the *New York World*, the *New York Sun*, the *New York Tribune*, *The New York Times*, the *Evening Journal*, and *The New York Herald*. *Harper's Weekly* and the Harper publishing business were located there after 1853. See Robert C. Boardman, "Newspaper Row Loses Last Paper," September 14, 1954, in the William Street file of the MCNY. This article is likely from the New York Times, but there is no attribution in the clipping.

[38] This store, founded by A.T. Stewart in 1848, was also known as the Marble Palace. It occupied a corner lot at Broadway and Chambers Street. In 1862, Stewart moved his store to Broadway and 9th Avenue. See Robert Hendrickson, *Grand Emporiums: The Illustrated History of America's Great Department Stores* (New York: Stein and Day, 1981), and William Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (Leicester, England: Leicester University Press, 1995). The Marble Palace features prominently in Elaine Abelson's work on women and consumerism, as well. See Elaine Abelson, *When Ladies Go A-Thieving: Middle-Class Shoplifters in the Victorian Department Store* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

knew that his father was coming, and sent her son for a celebratory cake. Thomas bought the cake at the bakery on the corner, and was returning with it when he was accosted in the street. A strange carriage pulled out of traffic, a man leapt out and grabbed Nast, dragging him into the carriage and clasping him tightly. Initially, Nast was terrified, and also concerned about the cake, which was squished between them. He realized after a moment, however, that the man was his father, and they arrived home together. In Paine's telling, this story is a charming one, with the ruined cake, the tender father, and the reunited family. But it also betrays some of the pleasures and anxieties which must have affected life on William Street.[39]

Young Thomas's errand sent him down the street to a German baker for cake his father would enjoy – something to remind him of Bavaria. We already know from Paine that Mrs. Nast chose her home for its German-friendly neighborhood, but it is worth examining the businesses and residents on William and surrounding streets to see exactly what kind of immigrant world young Nast encountered on his brief walk to obtain his mother's cake. Commercially, socially, and politically, it was a world dominated by immigrants and the working poor. Reading Paine's book in 1904, a reader might have found Nast's reunion with his father charming and funny. But the element of fear was real, and it is worth a second look. With Five Points only a few blocks away, no child on William Street could be ignorant of the dangers surrounding him.

The baker on the corner probably served a clientele almost exclusively of Germans. He may even have chosen his building specifically to be near William Street, or even one side of the street. This was because the immigrant communities of the lower East Side, especially near the central junction known as Five Points, tended to cluster by ethnicity, religion, and even point of origin. Entire buildings, sides of any given street, or whole blocks were often given over to a single ethnic immigrant group. The dominant group was the Irish, comprising more than two thirds of the area's inhabitants. Native-born Americans were only about ten percent of the adult population. Germans numbered almost fifteen percent, while small numbers of Italians, English, Poles, Scots, and

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[39] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, pp 12-13

non-German Jews made up the rest.[40] Among German immigrants, there were two differences which mattered. First was religion, which divided the group into three parts: Jews (about half of the German-speaking population), Catholics, and Protestants. Second was region, with most of the Jews originating in a part of what is now Poland but was then Prussian territory, but with more than half of the Christian Germans originating from either Baden-Wurttemberg or Hanover. Nast's family, from Bavaria, was among the smaller group of Christian Germans originating in Bavaria, Saxony, and Westphalia.[41] So the German baker from whom Nast bought his cake might easily have chosen to establish his business on that particular corner for the same reason that Mrs. Nast chose to live on William Street: there was a populous German-speaking community there, and it was growing all the time.[42]

Germans first came in large numbers to what became the United States in the eighteenth century, but by the early nineteenth century, they remained a small minority of American citizens. During the next one hundred years, by contrast, the population of German-speaking Americans, mostly immigrants, but also their children, would explode. In 1854, the peak of the wave, more than 200,000 Germans joined the American population.[43] That year was

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[40] Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points : the 19th-century New York City Neighborhood that Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and became the World's Most Notorious Slum* (New York: Free Press, 2001), pp. 43-45.

[41] Anbinder, *Five Points*, pp. 45-48.

[42] In 1855, according to the US census, there were 1,987 German bakers in New York. Other occupations, in descending order of frequency, were: tailor (6,709), servant (4,493), "food dealer" (3,045), clerk (2,249), cabinetmaker (2,153), and laborer (1,870). Over forty-five thousand Germans worked in New York, representing 47% of the total immigrant population. By contrast, although the Irish were employed at a slightly higher rate (50%, which was the highest recorded for any immigrant group in the census), the number of Irish laborers was 17,426, out of a total of 19,783 in New York. Irish domestic servants numbered 23, 386 to the city's 29,470. This distinction between a German propensity for artisanal work with higher pay and greater opportunity for the accumulation of wealth and the Irish dominance of laboring and service work was doubtless visible on the streets, where the marks of a man or woman's work were usually visible in his or her dress and workplace. So not only might Nast have witnessed the variety of immigrant experiences, he could hardly have missed the lesson that some immigrants were blessed with far greater advantages than others. Perhaps it was this comparison which initially tinted his memories rosy, since in contrast to the lives of many Irish immigrants, his family's experience was relatively easy. See Ernst, *Immigrant Life*, p. 213, Table 26, pp. 214-215, Table 27, and p. 219.

[43] John A. Hawgood, *The tragedy of German-America; the Germans in the United States of America during the nineteenth century--and after*. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), pp. 55-58, gives the number for 1854 as 215,000. Robert

the peak not only of pre-Civil War German immigration, but also of immigration by refugees of the Revolutions of 1848 in Europe. Although they are often called "Forty-Eighters," and so they called themselves, many of these immigrants came after the wave of revolutionary conflicts.[44] Nast and his family were among the first to leave, having been warned of the coming conflict and unwilling to be hostages to fate. Others delayed, more committed to social and political change or fearful of leaving their homeland. Beginning in 1850, many Germans who fought for liberal reforms, especially in Bavaria and Prussia, abandoned their fatherland for the friendlier shores of America. Thus, when Nast arrived in New York, it was to a thriving and growing German community, but as he aged, that community grew enormously.[45]

Not only did the total number of Germans grow in the early 1850s, the tenor of German-American life in New York shifted as well. The Forty-Eighters, as they arrived in the existing German community, immediately began to assert their moral, political, and social leadership. In contrast to the early German community, which spoke Low German and derived from the working and farming classes, the Forty-Eighters spoke High German, held university degrees, and believed themselves to possess moral authority as a result of their fight for liberal values in Germany. Indeed, they had to exploit these advantages because many of them had no other skills with which to make a living in America.[46]

Henry Billigmeier, *Americans From Germany: A Study in Cultural Diversity*. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1974), p. 79, says that the total German immigration number for 1854 was 230,000.

[44] See Carl Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952), p. 3.

[45] James F Harris, "The Arrival of the Europamude: Germans in America after 1848," in *German Forty-Eighters in America*, Charlotte Brancaforte, editor, (New York: P. Lang, 1989), pp. 1-3. Harris gives the total number of German emigrants between 1845 and 1854 as one million. Of these, he estimates that 670,800 arrived in the United States between 1850 and 1854, demonstrating the delay between 1848 and the arrival of the wave of German immigration. However, it is important to note that most of those immigrants were not refugees of the Revolution of 1848. Harris describes them using the term "*Europamude*," which translates as people who were "tired of Europe" and who were frustrated by its reliance on tradition. These immigrants rejected the traditionalism against which the Forty-eighters fought, but they rejected it in favor not of Liberal political values but of a generalized embrace of the new (Harris, p. 2). See also Theodore S. Hamerow, "The Two Worlds of the Forty-Eighters," in *The German Forty-Eighters in the United States* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 19-21.

[46] Wittke, p. 24; James M. Bergquist, "The Forty-Eighters: Catalysts of German-American Politics," in *The German-American Encounter: Conflict and Cooperation*

For the existing German-American community, however, the arrogant superiority of the Forty-Eighters was provocative. Rival newspapers, political positions, and neighborhood landmarks delineated the conflict between the older Germans in New York and the new arrivals. Thomas Nast, by this time engaged in his art education and constantly on the prowl for new images and ideas, must have observed the tension. Even if he ignored the political and literary exchanges, which was possible given his youth and poor reading skills, he would have seen the massive growth in population, the creation of leftist political clubs, and the parades staged by Forty-Eighters in support of their ideals.[47]

Socially, the neighborhood around William Street was as diverse as its population, yet it still reflected the challenges of the immigrant experience. William Street seems to have been somewhat more genteel than the streets immediately north of it, but it was within easy walking distance (only a few blocks) of the most terrible slums in America, Five Points.[48] For many immigrants, arriving at Castle Gardens with almost nothing (or, in the case of some Irish immigrants, absolutely nothing), it was in this neighborhood that they found cheap rents and readily available, albeit low paying jobs. Immigrants with slightly more money often chose to remain close to these neighborhoods, remaining connected to an ethnic enclave while living a few blocks away in a slightly nicer area. Thus, the immigrant experience could encompass a variety of lifestyles while remaining connected geographically, culturally, and economically. Even if Mrs. Nast managed to obtain a house of her own, and even if she had enough money to keep her family in relative comfort, she was surrounded

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between Two Cultures, 1800-2000, Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore, eds. (New York: Berghann Books, 2001), pp. 22-36; Hildegard Binder Johnson, "Adjustment to the United States," in *The Forty-Eighters: Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848*, A.E. Zucker, editor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. 43-78.

[47] Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience*, (New York: Humanity Books, 2000), pp. 228-231.

[48] William Street's seeming gentility did not totally exclude the violence and dangers of the neighborhood. In 1856, just after Nast began work for Frank Leslie, the newspaper reported a "Shocking Murder" on William Street. A German dance hall, operated from number 231, was the scene of an altercation on New Year's Day. When Martin Karnes was ejected from the hall, he returned after a short interval and provoked a knife fight with the man who opened the door to his knock, William Ruff. Karnes' knife cut Ruff's throat, killing him. Not only did this murder occur on Nast's street, it was reported by his employer. See *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*, vol. 1 no. 5 (January 12, 1856).

by examples of the possibilities and perils of immigration. In addition to the artisans and factories mentioned previously, washerwomen, rag-pickers, alcoholics, and beggars shared the streets just north of William Street with prostitutes, pick-pockets, and other petty criminals.[49] Frankfort Street, slashing east/west on a northbound angle from the river, might have provided a partial barrier to this terrible scene of deprivation and vice, but it did not keep little Thomas Nast from roaming.[50]

What might he have seen? We know of several places he walked through references in Paine's biography. First, Nast was once caught trying to cut a poster off of the wall of a brick building. This incident occurred at the corner of Houston and Eldridge streets. Second, Nast remembered admiring the lithograph of a tiger's head, the same tiger used by Engine Company Number Six, in a shop on the corner of James and Madison streets.[51] The Company itself, informally known as "Big Six," occupied a brownstone on Hester Street near Gouverneur Street.[52] We also

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[49] For an example of the crime in Nast's neighborhood, see *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*. For example, in the February 25, 1856 edition: "Successful Burglary and Robbery," "Charge of Gambling," "Charge of False Pretences," in the section "Police Intelligence." *Harper's Weekly*, not content merely to report crime, mixed it with bizarre descriptions of Chinese culture, reporting on its cover that the consumption of opium was becoming epidemic in New York because of imports from Asia. See *Harper's Weekly*, May 23, 1857, pages 321-322.

[50] On the poor and criminal in surrounding streets, see Anbinder, *Five Points*, pp. 72-105. Lithographic and newspaper references at the Museum of the City of New York show William Street as relatively prosperous and safe, with well-dressed residents and plenty of commercial activity. Other illustrations show streets only a few blocks away as the vilest centers of depravity. These lithographs, however, fall into two categories, which helps to explain the differences between them. First, represented by those of William Street, are the images intended as advertisements or idyllic, postcard-like pictures. We can see those qualities in these images because not only is there no loafing, no crime, and no illicit activity, there are no animals, no dirt, and not very much of anything else. The street seems artificially empty. The lithographs of Five Points, by contrast, were usually created in the service of outraged newspaper or magazine stories about the depravities and sufferings of the slum-dwellers. In this case, they over-emphasize the brawling, drinking, and sexual license of the inhabitants. Between the two is probably a middle ground where we can imagine young Thomas Nast, observing much of the negative but enjoying the pleasures of the positive.

[51] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, pp. 11-12 refers to both of these locations.

[52] The company known as the "Big Six" derived from a previously dissolved fire company also called Engine Company Number Six. The company was re-formed in 1849 under the leadership of a group of local men, including John C. Reilly and William M. Tweed, but its first location is unclear. The Hester Street house was occupied in 1854, when Nast was 14 years old. The neighborhood served by the Engine Company was bounded by the river (and South Street) to the east, Grand

know that Nast attended art classes with Theodore Kauffman, whose studio on Broadway required Nast to cross Park Row, about four blocks, and then travel along Broadway a few blocks. The Academy of Art, at 13th Street, was a far longer distance, closer to twenty-five blocks. In walking to the Academy of Art, Nast traversed practically the entire north/south axis of the city.

In this space, between Broadway to the West and 13th Street to the North, bounded by the river on the East, Nast could have witnessed practically everything for which New York was famous. On Park Row, three or four blocks west, he could walk past lovely brick homes occupied by genteel families. Gradually, wealthy New Yorkers were moving uptown, but in the 1840s and 1850s, plenty of impressive homes remained the property of the well-to-do. Crossing Chambers Street towards what is now Foley Square would have taken Nast into Five Points, however, a very different atmosphere. Filthy, crime-ridden, and prone to disastrous fires, Five Points was coming to symbolize the slum for all city-dwellers. It was the center, as well, of Democratic politics among Irish New Yorkers, and it therefore contained all the detritus of nineteenth century political life. Nast could have seen handbills and party stump speakers, bars where political patronage was distributed, and newly arrived immigrants in the care of party operatives who would escort them to housing in exchange for political support.[53] Between these two extremes lay the vast majority of the neighborhood, immigrant and native-born alike. Business owners and workers traveled New York's streets daily, on their way to and from work, selling goods and services. Nast could have observed various artisans at work, including shoemakers, bakers, tanners, and printers. He could have purchased almost any commodity in almost any quantity, if he had money of his own to spend. In short, he lived at the beating heart of New York's growing commercial power.

That heart rarely rested easy during Nast's childhood. The anecdote Nast told about his father's return from the sea recounted his terror at being snatched from the street by what he took to be a

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Street to the north, Catherine Street to the south, and Bowery, or 4th Avenue, to the west. The station likely stayed within those bounds from 1849 until the organization of municipal fire companies in 1865, and was never very far from Nast's home on William Street. Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 11, says the engine company was "less than a dozen blocks away."

[53] See Anbinder, *Five Points*, pp. 48-50 and chapters three and five, passim. The literature on Tammany Hall, cited in note 58, also addresses this political culture.

stranger. His fear, while minimized by Paine, must have been very real because danger, whether from stranger, neighbor or friend, was a constant presence on and near William Street. Nativist riots, race riots, drunken brawls, and simple crime would have been familiar concerns for the Nast family.[54] One explanation of Nast's silence regarding the darker side of his neighborhood would be that he rarely experienced it. If this were true, he would hardly be expected to dwell on it in his memories. However, it is hard to imagine that this was so. We already know that Nast was obliged to walk several blocks to school, to art classes, and on errands for his mother. The Academy of Art was far uptown, in a city which virtually ended at what is now mid-town. It was quite a walk for a young boy, even in the nineteenth century, when walking was both a necessity and a pastime. So Nast was definitely in the streets during the day. He also remembered experiences which suggest a familiarity with street life at other times. For example, he loved to chase fire trucks as they sped toward emergencies, and to draw their exploits. Not all of these could have been in broad daylight, and Nast would have been in school during those hours, anyway. So he must have chased fire trucks either on weekends or in the early morning and early evening hours. These were the same times that saw workingmen going to and from their jobs, stopping at taverns, and generally enjoying city life. Another suggestion that Nast had some familiarity with the streets is his tale about how he convinced Frank Leslie to employ such a young man. In that story, Nast walks through the still-dark streets to the ferry landing, waiting as dawn breaks. He draws in the landing, the buildings

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[54] In 1834-5, residents of Five Points and surrounding streets rioted three times, first in reaction to an election controversy, second against the abolitionist sentiments of local activists, targeting African-Americans living on the lower east side, and third in an expression of the tension between local native-born Americans and immigrant Catholics. In later years, violence was a constant threat in political interaction, for example in 1845, when a gang of thugs broke into a Tammany Hall meeting and forced the revision of a resolution on Texas. Riots could also occur over cultural events, as in 1849, when the dueling Shakespeare interpretations of Macready and Forrest led to riots that burned the Park Theatre. On the 1849 riot, see Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow, Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1988). On the 1834-5, see Anbinder, *Five Points*, p. 27 and pp. 141-144. Anbinder's discussion of street crime and the perils of drink can be found throughout, but especially on pages 20-27, and 72-105. Nativist political and social sentiments were continually expressed in political debates and party publications, as well. See Anthony Gronowicz. *Race and Class Politics in New York City Before the Civil War* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), pp. 109-112.

around it, and the static detail of the scene, waiting for the hour when people will rush to board the boat. Only then, in a flurry of activity, does he add the human life which makes the drawing so pleasing. What might Nast have seen, creeping through the dark streets, sitting, and waiting at the dock?

While we cannot know exactly what Nast saw, it seems extremely unlikely that he was unaware of the teeming human jungle which surrounded him. Uptown, wealthy New Yorkers felt sufficiently threatened by the slums of Five Points, the crime of the lower-east side, and the questionable business practices of the commercial interests there that they reached out in both regulatory and charitable enterprises.[55] How much more pressing would those problems have seemed to a young mother and her small son? But, of course, the impression Nast gives, especially in pointing to the excitement of fires and his pleasure in drawing, is that he was less afraid of the streets than thrilled by them. So, while we should see his experience with his father's return as a hint of the very real danger that surrounded him, we should also recognize the seductive power of that danger for a youngster whose primary interest in life was the visual representation of the world around him. The Nast who struggled to escape a stranger's unexpected embrace was a vulnerable child in a very tough neighborhood, but the Nast who chased the Big Six was a burgeoning visual journalist who embraced the world around him enthusiastically.

What place did the Nast family occupy in this maelstrom of immigrant and native culture? Amid so much change, especially in the Nasts' economic status, determining the Nasts' class is difficult, but it may help to explain why Nast went to work so young. Nast explained his move to Frank Leslie's employ in terms of the seizure of opportunity. However, other factors may also have pushed him toward earning a living, especially in the difficult

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[55] On charitable efforts in the United States, there is a substantial historiography. See, as recent examples, Lawrence J. Friedman and, Mark D. McGarvie, eds. *Charity, Philanthropy and Civility in American History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700-1865* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). The disorder and ineffectiveness of early efforts at charity were only remedied much later. See Joan Waugh, *Unsentimental Reformer: The Life of Josephine Shaw Lowell* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). A brief sketch of these charitable activities is provided by Homberger, p. 86. One example of the questionable practices which alarmed genteel New Yorkers was the operation of railroads and omnibuses on Sunday. James Harper, publisher and brother of Fletcher Harper (Nast's mentor at *Harper's Weekly*) tried to stop this practice while he was mayor, but failed. See Gronowicz, p. 110.

economic climate of the late 1850s. Joseph Nast was one of a small number of professional musicians in New York. Nast mentions his father's employment at various music halls and his work with a house band, but does not say whether Joseph Nast obtained steady employment or only freelance and seasonal work. There is no indication that Mrs. Nast worked to support her family, although the years between Joseph Nast's departure from Landau and his return to the family in New York may have required her to find some income. Most lower-class women worked, especially in Five Points, as washerwomen, cooks, seamstresses and salesgirls. Many worked in wealthy homes as domestic servants while others were prostitutes, dancers, and thieves. For a married woman to work was a telling marker of working-class status. Even if Appolonia never worked, Nast would have seen working women every day, and could easily have contrasted their lives with those of wealthier, more leisured women on Park Row or at Burton's Theater. Nast is nearly silent regarding the family's finances, but his interest in earning money at the door of Mr. Bryan's museum, and his aggressive approach to Frank Leslie, suggest that even if the family had enough money at home, Nast could expect little in the way of support as he grew older, and no pocket money.

In Landau, he might not have noticed the lack so much, but New York was full of young boys with money to spend. The largest and most famous group were the newsboys, who spread their product throughout the city on foot. Picking up papers first thing in the morning, these boys sold their stock by shouting out the headlines, and could earn as much as one dollar per day. Newsboys developed routines, including eating in restaurants and frequenting plays and musicals at local venues. Many were orphans, living on the street entirely without adult supervision. While newsboys were a highly visible example of young workers, they were only one of several groups Nast might have observed. Immigrant children frequently worked, selling fruit, picking rags, or serving domestically. Older children, both immigrant and native-born, worked as apprentices in shops and factories. For Nast, these children may have provided role models, suggesting that work was something he need not wait to commence.[56]

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[56] Regarding child workers, including newsboys, see Anbinder, *Five Points*, pp. 129-133. Frank Leslie referenced these children in his second issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*. Complaining about blocked streets, he pointed to the crowds of "thousands of girls and boys employed in the innumerable manufacturing

Even if the Nast family was relatively prosperous, the timing of Nast's entry into the working world is suggestive of economic hardship. In the account Paine provides, there is little indication of why, suddenly, Nast abandoned his artistic training and his job for Mr. Bryan to join the staff at *Leslie's*. Perhaps, given the magazine's recent appearance, Nast simply sought a new opportunity. However, Paine and James Parton, Nast's wife's cousin, both suggest that Nast and Leslie found the idea of a fifteen year-old artist unlikely.[57] What could have motivated Nast to make such a surprising offer to the entrepreneur? One possible answer is the economic trouble New York endured beginning in 1854. At the end of that year, a downturn in the economy led to layoffs, reduced wages, and widespread privation. This was especially pressing among the city's poorest residents in Five Points, but laborers all over the city suffered. It was in the following year, with few jobs available and a depressed local economy that Nast sought out Leslie. In 1858/9, with the death of Joseph Nast, the value of young Nast's income must have become even more important. The cause of death is not given, but if Joseph had been ill for some time, unemployment might have joined with the general economic malaise to force Nast to work.[58]

In need of money, whether from youthful desire or family necessity, and surrounded by scenes he was eager to draw, Nast sought employment within the blossoming world of illustrated journalism. In later life, Nast de-emphasized his immigrant experience and minimized the rough-and-tumble nature of his childhood. But when we examine it in detail, the links between what he saw in youth and what he drew later are unmistakable. Nast did not simply emerge from the streets as an illustrator, he brought their sights and sounds with him to *Leslie's*, capitalizing on his experiences for personal gain.

Publishing Periodicals in New York

Thomas Nast left no records to indicate when he first noticed the thriving publishing world of antebellum New York. We do not

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establishments lying between Spruce and John Streets." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*, January 5, 1856.

[57] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 18. James Parton, *Caricature and Other Comic Art In All Times and Many Lands* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877), pp. 318-334, especially pp. 326-327.

[58] On the depression of 1854 in New York, see Anbinder, *Five Points*, pp. 133-135; Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 28.

know whether his parents read newspapers, although there were several German-language papers they could have read.[59] We do not know whether Nast observed the comings and goings of the young men and skilled artisans whose work produced the printed pages so common by mid-century. At some point, however, Nast must have become aware of the opportunities inherent in the new illustrated newspapers, because he leapt at the chance to use his talent in their service.[60] The ink on the first edition of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News* was hardly dry when Nast charmed his way into a job, which suggests that he – who so loved drawing the events taking place on the streets – immediately understood what illustrated journalism had to offer. And New York was a uniquely rich market for such a paper.

Whether regarding newspapers, magazines, books or prints, New York was the capital of American literary culture. Not only did one third of the periodicals delivered in America issue from New York State, the city of New York held a powerful sway over the

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[59] Joseph Thomas Nast, as a musician with a large band, may have read sheet music, which would imply a level of education that might also include literacy. Mrs. Nast is a complete mystery in this regard. No letters exist from Thomas Nast to his father, mother, or sister, and there is no record of him reading letters from them, either. When he was in Germany in 1860, Nast visited family in Landau and kept a diary for his own use and Sallie's interest, but made no mention of any literary artifacts (letters, diaries, family bibles, or other written materials). If the Nast family moved west after the 1860's, and they were illiterate, their absence in Nast's life after 1861 makes more sense, but there is no conclusive information on this subject. According to Tolzmann, there were five thousand German-language periodicals published between 1732 and the late twentieth century, making German periodicals the largest non-English group in American history. In 1872, Tolzmann calculates that eighty percent of the periodicals in a language other then English were in German, nation-wide. Of these, many were in states where massive German immigration meant an enormous reading public, especially Ohio and Indiana. In 1890 there were 727 German-language publications in America, many in the mid-west. The largest and most famous New York newspaper for German speaking citizens was the *New Yorker Staatszeitung*. In addition to newspapers, printing houses arose to provide German-language books, including translations of English works. Thus, a German-speaking immigrant could remain entirely current on American politics and culture without reading English, so long as he or she was literate. Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience*, pp. 228-231 and p. 397.

[60] One possibility is that Nast saw illustrated journalism on the street. Distribution, by 1855, consisted of sending a large packet of newspapers to an owner of a newsstand. He would paste the cover onto a large poster, displaying its illustrations and text for any passerby to see. The rest of the papers would be folded and sold, either by newsboys or at the stand. Since newsstands were quite common on New York's corners, Nast might easily have seen the emerging art of illustrated journals like *Gleason's Pictorial*. See Gambee, *Frank Leslie and His Illustrated Newspaper*, p. 50.

imaginations of writers and illustrators. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News, Harper's Weekly*, and other illustrated magazines were of national scope, both in terms of the issues they addressed and the circulation they enjoyed. Both emphasized the culture of New York both visually and in text, and served as a source of news, gossip, and pleasure for New York's literate population. Scenes of the city, jokes about the city, notations regarding city events, all held a special place in these magazines.[61]

The journalistic culture this engendered in New York can be sketched in broad outlines through the personalities and opportunities there. Publishers, artisans, and artists all thrived in the jostling, creative city. The Harper brothers, who would play such a central role in Thomas Nast's life, are an example of the young men exploiting immense opportunities of the era. Beginning with nothing, they built a publishing empire, expanding into illustrated magazines at almost the same moment that Nast began working for Frank Leslie.[62]

There were four Harper brothers. In order of birth, they were James (1795-1869), John (1797-1875), Joseph Wesley (1801-1870 called Wesley), and Fletcher (1806-1877). James and John began working in the business in 1817, when they were twenty-two and twenty, respectively. Each had trained with other printers, learning to use the equipment and saving money towards their own shop. The first book published by J. & J. Harper, Printers, was an English translation of Seneca's *Morals*. As the two younger brothers joined their business, the Harper firm grew, becoming Harper and Brothers in 1833. By that year, the firm enjoyed substantial profits, owned several buildings on Cliff and Pearl streets (a few blocks from Thomas Nast's future home) and published books from American and European authors on a regular basis. The firm also collaborated with other firms, sometimes in joint imprint, other times simply on contracts. In later years, the Harper firm was equally famous for its periodicals, including *Harpers Weekly* and *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Prosperity

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[61] On New York's ascendancy and the content of illustrated magazines, see Mott, *History of American Magazines*, pp. 103-107.

[62] There are three excellent, if not recent, treatments of the history of the Harper companies: John Henry Harper. *The House of Harper* (Harper and Brothers, New York: 1912); Eugene Exman. *The House of Harper: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Publishing* (Harper and Row, New York: 1967) and Eugene Exman. *The Brothers Harper* (Harper and Row, New York: 1965). Also of interest is Jacob Abbott, *The Harper Establishment* (Harper and Brothers, New York: 1855).

was one result of a success which continues uninterrupted to the present day.[63]

The Harper brothers are a useful example of the vitality of New York's printing entrepreneurs because they demonstrate the rapidity with which publishers could make fortunes, and because their business depended on flexibility and unpredictability. Born on a Long Island farm, these men built a publishing empire in less than forty years. Each participated in the central business, but each supervised branch operations in his particular sub-field. For example, Fletcher Harper, most central to the life of Thomas Nast, became a publisher of magazines, most notably *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and the *Weekly*. Unique in the extent of their success, the Harpers nevertheless are representative of an entire class of men who built businesses on the increasing appetite of Americans for literature. In New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Boston, and, to a lesser extent, smaller cities, publishing was a growth industry, promising riches built on the education and interest of readers across the Republic.

In the Harpers, too, we see the central characteristic of urban publishing: its constant change. From the beginning, the Harpers' business grew by recruiting new writers, seeking out new manuscripts from overseas, and adopting new forms of literature and literary commerce, especially the illustrated magazine. Publishing was not a business in which one could sit still, waiting for work to arrive. The Harpers' dynamism was the root of their success. Occasionally, that dynamism could even shade into the mildly unethical, as when they published English books without the permission of the authors or any payment of royalties. Because there was no international copyright law, and because American audiences craved British literature, publishers in America sought the latest manuscripts and fought to the death to obtain them. Frequently, books published in London would be whisked onto a ship, carried across the ocean, and reset for publication in the States within a few weeks. The Harpers, like their competitors, paid a premium for these works, always hoping to scoop the competition. The publishing world was cut-throat, and one had to think on one's feet to survive.[64]

Purloined British books demonstrate the dynamism of the American book market, but they also point to the more mundane

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[63] Eugene Exman, *The Brothers Harper*, pp. 1-37 and passim.

[64] On English re-prints, see Exman, pp 48-59, especially pp. 53-54.

aspect of publishing. Someone had to actually set the type of those manuscripts, often working all night to transcribe the text. Those men, artisans trained through the apprentice system just like the Harper brothers, also thrived in early-nineteenth-century New York. Because of the dependency of printing, especially of illustrations, on artisanal labor, printing companies were places where literary and working-class New York intersected. Young men educated at Harvard and descended from New York's earliest Dutch settlers might stop by the office to present a manuscript, only to find themselves standing next to a semi-literate German immigrant artist like Thomas Nast.

Art, as a feature of New York's periodical literature, was not new. Printed images, usually engraved on copper or inscribed into wooden printing blocks, appeared as early as the turn of the nineteenth century. In the 1840's, new methods of lithography, printing from stone, made it far faster, easier, and cheaper to produce prints on paper. This innovation, imported from Europe via New York, meant that current events or sentimental scenes could be represented through images within two to three weeks, and it was the foundation of the businesses of both newspaper publishers and printmakers like Currier and Ives.[65] It was Frank Leslie, however, who provided a method which allowed for faster printing of wood-block images in newspapers. Observing that the delay was largely caused by the time required to inscribe a drawing onto a wood block, Leslie hired multiple engravers, broke blocks into smaller squares, and farmed out the inscribing. Working on a smaller portion of a large drawing, craftsmen could finish much faster. They then fitted the pieces together, reassembling the picture, and printed from the whole.[66] Some Nast drawings,

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[65] On lithography and its changing role in the United States, see Peter C. Marzio, *The Democratic Art* (Fort Worth, Texas: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1980. On lithographic art and Currier and Ives, see Sally Pierce and Catharina Slautterback, *Boston Lithography, 1825-1880* (Boston: Boston Athenaeum, 1991), and Bryan F. LeBeau, *Currier and Ives: America Imagined* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

[66] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, pp. 19-20; Mott, *History of American Magazines*, p. 44; Gambee, *Frank Leslie and His Illustrated Newspaper*, p. 47. Gambee points out that Frank Leslie didn't introduce the multiple-block method to the United States, but that his work with it was the first successful use of it in the service of illustrated journalism. It is because of his success that Leslie is so closely associated with the process. It is also important to note, when calculating the time required to produce an illustration, the curious dating of Leslie's paper. Issues bore a date which reflected the week to come, rather than the week just past. So, for example, the January 12 issue, in which a New Year's Day murder was reported, arrived on

executed in this way, can be seen today at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The lines from the blocks are faintly visible on the prints.[67] Leslie's method sped print production enormously, and it enhanced the already competitive atmosphere among newspaper publishers. Every story was a race to print, with accompanying pictures, often embellished with lurid detail.[68] In the case of disastrous, tragic, or splendid events, the visual element could substantially enhance the power of a written account. Dynamic, business-savvy publishing men like the Harper brothers saw this and gambled on the success of an illustrated periodical.

Newspaper publishing centered on Franklin Square in the 1840s and 1850s. Many newspapers remained there after the Civil War. The Harper Brothers publishing house, including *Harper's Weekly*, operated out of Franklin Square into the twentieth century.[69] So when illustrated newspapers became a hot new trend in publishing, their production also centered on Franklin Square, within a mile of Nast's home. He admitted to Paine that he was once so captivated by a printed poster he tried to tear it down to keep.[70] Perhaps the images in newspapers, hawked in the street by children his own age and younger, were equally enthralling as he honed his artistic talent. As we saw above, there is good reason to think that Nast needed a source of income. How natural for his environment, talent, and need to coincide in illustrated newspapers.

Had those papers been concerned primarily with presenting an idealized vision of New York life, or had they relied on allegorical

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newsstands on January 5th. Thus the illustrations in the January 12th issues reflected the news of the last week of December and first week of January, and took only about one week to create. See Gambee, p. 56.

[67] Three prints, 1653 (3, 4 and 5), at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Prints, 19th Century, MM85208 and SP3599.

[68] An excellent example of this is *Leslie's* edition of January 20, 1872. On the cover is a full-page depiction of the murder of Colonel Fisk, complete with the stunned onlooker, the billowing cape, and the cloud of smoke surrounding the firing gun. A subtitle identifies the location as the Grand Central Hotel, the "scene of the tragedy." See Mott, *History of American Magazines*, p. 454.

[69] The Harpers began their business on Front Street, near the docks, then moved to Pearl, to 82 Cliff Street, and finally to Franklin Square (in 1853). The Cliff Street building burned, forcing a move, at which time the Harpers joined other newspapers in Franklin Square. All of these addresses were within ten blocks of Thomas Nast's home on William Street. See Exman, *The Brothers Harper*, p. 5, p. 12, and pp. 353-362; and Exman, *The House of Harper*, pp. 37-47.

[70] This is the same reference as above in the discussion on Nast's possible Roman Catholicism. He tried to tear down the poster while playing hooky from church, in an impressive combination of wicked behavior. Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 12.

images. Nast would probably have been unable to create images to suit. However, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News* and papers like it recognized crime, disaster, and informal city life as much more appealing subject matter for readers.[71] These were subjects with which Nast was familiar. Moreover, he could simply walk out of his door and take a short walk to observe any sort of city life, from slums to mansions to docks and museums. It is hard to imagine a more serendipitous partnership than that between the young Nast and an illustrated magazine. Frank Leslie, persuaded by Nast's drawing of the ferry dock, agreed.

Conclusion

To begin with Nast's own version of his childhood is to embark on a narrative of triumph over obscurity, poverty, and confusion. Through his talent, so the story goes, a little boy with no physical strength and little schooling became one of America's greatest artists. This tale, while romantic and appealing, ignores the context in which Nast lived and the fluidity of the world into which he thrust himself. Nast consistently remembered the world as a rosier place than it actually was, and when memories might have been unpleasant, he edited them for consumption by the genteel audience of the turn of the century. Through his biographer, Albert Bigelow Paine, Nast transmitted a version of the past which emphasized precisely those themes which he believed most powerful in American life: talent, opportunity, and hard work.

A closer reading of the New York of his childhood reveals a tougher city, one in which young Nast might very well have been lost. That he was not is a testament not to the irrelevancy of New York to his life story, but to his ability to transform his experiences in the service of his professional and personal ambitions. He was not the only boy in his neighborhood to do so. In fact, his greatest nemesis, William M. Tweed, grew up only a few blocks away, and was an emerging power during Nast's childhood. Indeed, Tweed and Nast were linked not only by their later association but also through their shared neighborhood. Both attended a school on Chrystie Street. Tweed enrolled there briefly at 11 years of age, in 1834. He left within months, whether unable to learn or uninterested in school, when the vibrancy of the streets seemed so much more appealing. His parents enrolled him in a boarding school operated by a protestant clergyman, but this lasted only a

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[71] Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 21

year. Tweed left school for good at fourteen.[72] Nast entered the school at Chrystie Street at some point after his family moved to William Street. He left to attend a German-speaking school, which also proved unsatisfactory. The second connection has already been mentioned in relation to Nast's interest in fires. By 1848, Tweed was married and working as a clerk at J. and G.C. Alexander Company. He helped to establish a fire company, the "Big Six," in the neighborhood. Nast, living nearby and increasingly interested in the sights of the city, often chased the fire trucks as they raced to local fires. Some of Nast's first experiences of visual reportage, which became the centerpiece of his early work for Frank Leslie and Fletcher Harper, were provided by William Tweed and his fire company in the early 1850s.

These two coincidences would not be of special interest to an examiner of Nast's life except for the way in which they highlight the construction of identity in Nast's autobiographical statements. Biographers of Tweed, building a narrative arc to his criminal activity, have no need to hide the fact that the neighborhood he and Nast shared was rife with gang activity, petty criminals and ward politics. Writers may even exaggerate these qualities to suggest a basis for Tweed's later behavior. Nast, on the other hand, became a middle-class family-man, a person whose home, wife, and work were eminently respectable. How could he have come from the same neighborhood as Tweed? Reading Nast's reminiscences and Paine's biography, one would see only differences between them, rather than the similar environments from which they emerged. In contrast to the portrayal of Tweed's childhood, Nast's emerges as an idyll during which his latent talent struggled against only the conventional strictures of school and family.This essay argues, however, that the world from which Nast came was one of great vibrancy, both in positive and negative terms. Positively, it

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[72] Alan Bales, *Tiger in the Streets* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1962), p. 33. Tweed has been the subject of a lively historiographical tradition. A sampling of the relevant literature includes: Roger A. Fisher, *Them Damned Pictures: Explorations in American Political Cartoon Art* (North Haven ,Connecticut: Archon Books, 1996); Jerome Mushkat, *Tammany: The Evolution of a Political Machine, 1789-1865* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971); Seymour J. Mandelbaum, *Boss Tweed's New York* (Chicago:Ivan R. Dee, 1965); Denis Tilden Lynch, *"Boss" Tweed: The Story of a Grim Generation* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927); M.R. Werner, *Tammany Hall* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1928). The corruption of the Gilded Age, including Tweed and Tammany Hall, are discussed in Mark Wahlgren Summers *The Era of Good Stealings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

contained a variety of nationalities and personalities, many exciting and exotic for a small boy. It offered him a microcosm of American life within a few blocks. Young Nast could hardly have avoided the poverty, crime, and simple dirt for which New York was famous. New York's city life, then, was all around Nast in his formative years. It taught him how to draw by providing raw material on every corner. And Nast used that material not only to hone his talent, but to obtain his first real job. Thus, the street life he chose to ignore at the end of his life must be acknowledged as the basis for his earliest success.

Ireland's Neutrality Policy in World War II: The Impact of Belligerent Pressures on the Implementation of Neutrality

Greg Spelman

Interference by belligerent nations in the domestic affairs of neutral nations was one of the primary dangers to the viability of neutrality in World War II. At the outbreak of the war on September 1, 1939, the prime minister of Ireland, Eamon de Valera, promptly introduced the Emergency Powers Act the following day to safeguard this aspect of neutrality. Among other things, the Emergency Powers Act authorized the Irish Government to make the necessary provisions to secure and maintain public safety and protect the independence of the nation and has resulted in Ireland's World War II experience being referred to as the 'Emergency'. The Act suspended the democratic and legislative operations of the Irish Parliament and allowed Ireland to be governed by Emergency Powers Orders. These imbued the Government with extensive but undefined powers, so that it could respond to any contingency that may arise to threaten the nation's neutrality. While the democratic legitimacy of the Emergency Powers Act may have been questionable, it was designed to empower the Irish Government with the authority to employ measures that would diminish the likelihood of the belligerent governments having justification to violate Ireland's neutrality. De Valera believed that the passage of the Emergency Powers Act was necessary because Ireland's neutrality was precarious and bound to come under considerable pressure from belligerent states attempting to obtain concessions and advantages.[1] While Ireland was prepared for threats of this nature, the nation was unprepared for the kind of diplomatic and economic coercion exerted from the Allied coalition. Whether the belligerent

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[1] T. Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History* (Glasgow, 1985), p. 172; R. Fanning, *Independent Ireland* (Dublin, 1983), p. 122.

pressures on Ireland manifested in an internal fashion, or the more overt external method favored by the Allies, they were designed to cause Ireland to transgress its policy of neutrality.

Censorship was one of the powers granted to the Irish Government by the Emergency Powers Act. It enabled Irish Military Intelligence (G2) to monitor information from postal and telegraphic sources in order to preserve the nation's security. Also, the Censorship Board censored weather reports and forecasts because of the potential military value that they provided.[2] While the Irish authorities assumed these powers, the primary justification for censorship was that it should ensure the belligerent states were portrayed impartially by the Irish press and were not provoked into violating Ireland's neutrality. To this end, publications of all kinds, plays, documentaries, films, records, and, in particular, the Irish press, were censored. This meant that opinions and editorials about the war, neutrality, and any subject of national significance were suppressed, along with inferences of war guilt and military aggression[3] Irish censorship was a harsher and more comprehensive policy than that instituted by other neutral states, such as Switzerland and Sweden. However, unlike these neutral states, Ireland did not have its own foreign correspondents. Instead, it was dependent upon partisan British and American sources, such as Reuters, the British Press Association, the American Associated Press, and the United Press. These organizations had items marked for exclusive presentation in Ireland, which emphasized Nazi persecution of Catholics. Also, news, which portrayed the Allies in a poor light was not passed on to Irish news agencies at all. This bias of the Allied news sources was particularly evident in the revelations to the Irish media of atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese and the Nazis compared with the silence regarding acts of violence committed by the Soviets and the Americans. While Irish press sources were undoubtedly biased, Irish censorship was inordinate, intrusive, contrary to democratic freedoms, and, ultimately, had little direct impact upon the viability of Ireland's neutrality. The supposedly un-neutral sentiments of the Irish press would not have precipitated an

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[2] Fanning, *Independent Ireland*, p. 123; D. O'Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland, 1939-1945: Neutrality, Politics and Society* (Cork, 1996), p. 102.

[3] T.P. Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow* (London, 1993), p. 524 and p. 574; R. Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-1945* (Dublin, 1983), p. 162.

invasion of Ireland.[4] This decision would have been founded upon more strategic concerns such as, in the case of the British, acquisition of the treaty ports and, in the case of the Germans, the diversion of British forces during a concurrent invasion of Britain.

The primary role of censorship in Ireland was, in fact, to conceal the domestic agenda of the governing political party, Fianna Fail, which was suppression of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The IRA imperiled Ireland's neutrality because it had the power to violate de Valera's guarantee that Ireland would not be used as a base for attacks against Britain. On January 12, 1939, the chief of staff of the IRA, Sean Russell, sent an ultimatum to the British Government demanding the removal of all military and civilian personnel and equipment from Northern Ireland within four days. When this period elapsed without compliance, the IRA initiated the S-Plan, sparking off more than 100 episodes of terrorism and sabotage in Britain and Northern Ireland between January 1939 and March 1940. IRA bombs exploded in public toilets, letterboxes, public telephones, post offices, cinemas, warehouses and railway stations. The campaign escalated in frequency and violence in December 1939, when two members of the IRA were sentenced to death in Britain for orchestrating a bombing in Coventry on August 25, which killed five people. IRA sabotage had the capacity to debilitate the British war effort by striking at vital components, including aircraft production, or at infrastructure such as railway tracks or power stations.[5]

The Irish Government responded more quickly and decisively than the British Government to this threat. On September 8, 1939, Gerald Boland was appointed Minister of Justice and immediately issued 70 warrants for the internment of suspected members and associates of the IRA. A raid launched the next day resulted in the arrest of half of the IRA's General Headquarters and by November, almost every IRA unit had had members arrested.[6] The Government's campaign was delivered a blow in December, when the Dublin High Court deemed the warrants to be contrary to the Irish Constitution and ordered the release of the internees. This was just a temporary setback and on January 5, 1940, the Irish Government amended the Emergency Powers Act to make it exempt from judicial review. From January 1940, the IRA was

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[4] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 299.
[5] J. B. Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA, 1916-1974* (Cambridge, MA, 1970), p. 145f; Coogan, *De ValeraLong Fellow, Long Shadow*, p. 523; Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 86.
[6] O'Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland*, p. 169.

devastated by arrests and concentrated on survival, rather than sabotage and terrorism. This only encouraged the Irish Government to continue the suppression and in August 1940, it increased penalties for IRA activity, making offences such as treason, murder, terrorism, and sabotage, subject to the death penalty. Subsequently, in 1941, the IRA began to disintegrate and executed one of its members without trial and sentenced its chief of staff, along with two other members, to death for treachery. Throughout the Emergency, five members of the IRA were executed by order of special criminal courts, three more died on a hunger strike, over 500 were interned without trial, and thousands were arrested and detained for questioning.[7] By 1945, the suppression left the IRA bereft of a chief of staff, a general headquarters, and an army council.[8] The suppression was engendered because the Irish Government feared that the British Government would use the suppression of terrorism as the moral justification for an invasion of Ireland to seize the treaty ports. It was done to protect Ireland's neutrality and in accordance with the Irish Government's policy of ensuring that Ireland was not used as a base of operations against Britain.

Though the suppression of the IRA was crucial to the viability of Ireland's neutrality, it had the potential to muster sympathy and support behind the IRA and plunge the nation into another civil war. De Valera sought to avoid this dilemma with use of censorship. The Censorship Board compelled the Irish press to emphasize the murderous aspects of IRA sabotage and terrorism, with words such as murderer, terrorist, and assassin replacing more neutral words such as, killer, gunman, and republican, when describing members of the IRA.[9] Censorship was also applied to any information, which could engender sympathy for the IRA, including political justifications for its actions and hunger strikes, by interned members. Similarly the arrest, detention, trial, and execution of persons under the Emergency Powers Act or the Offences Against the State Act were censored, as was information about IRA members who were killed in skirmishes with police. The IRA attempted to circumvent censorship by distributing pamphlets and posters, but the Irish police too seized these. Thus, censorship was instrumental in protecting Ireland's neutrality from

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[7] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 359f; T. Gray, *The Lost Years: The Emergency in Ireland, 1939-1945* (London, 1997), p. 10.
[8] Bell, *The Secret Army*, p. 148.
[9] O'Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland*, p. 240.

internal dissent and subversion, by withholding information about the suppression of the IRA and also denying the organization the public forum in which to air its political rhetoric, legitimize its actions, and turn public sympathy away from neutrality. While this was the primary function of censorship during the Emergency, of course it was not politically expedient for the government to advertise the fact.

The IRA also endangered Ireland's neutrality by its association with German spies. German agents arrived in Ireland between 1939 and 1941, despite persistent protests from the German Minister in Ireland, Dr Hempel, who feared that covert activities in Ireland might provoke de Valera to abandon the policy of neutrality. or incite Britain to invade the treaty ports. The most notorious of the German spies was Herman Goertz, who parachuted into Ireland on May 5, 1940. He remained at liberty for 19 months, but did not manage to make any significant reports to Berlin or coordinate action with the IRA against either the British or the Irish governments.[10] Aside from Goertz, the other nine German spies were arrested almost immediately upon their arrival in Ireland. Their missions were to send weather reports and other information to Germany, as well as forging links with the IRA to persuade it to commit sabotage in Northern Ireland, with the goal of preoccupying British troops who may have been utilized elsewhere.[11] The links between German agents and the IRA were very real. On May 24, 1940, Irish Military Intelligence agents raided an IRA collaborator's house and discovered *Plan Kathleen*. It was a rudimentary plan, formulated by the IRA, which, although not implemented, was designed to facilitate a German landing at Donegal and proclaim the liberation of Northern Ireland. Swift and decisive action by the Irish authorities, as well as ineptitude on the part of German intelligence (Abwehr), ensured that German espionage did not threaten Ireland's neutrality. Even Goertz concluded that these espionage missions were futile, as the IRA "had become an underground movement ... heavily suppressed ... I considered them worthless."[12]

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[10] Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow*, p. 621; *Documents from the National Archives, Dublin, Relating to Ireland's Neutrality Policy.* Department of the Prime Minister (Taoiseach), 'German Agents: Internment, Release and Repatriation'.

[11] J. A. Murphy, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century* (Dublin, 1975), p. 104.

[12] Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow*, p. 621.

In addition to insulating Ireland's neutrality from domestic dangers, the Irish Government also took measures to protect its neutrality from external threats. In the months prior to the outbreak of war in Europe, de Valera consistently declared that the Irish Government would institute a vast system of recruitment to protect Ireland's neutrality. In 1938, Ireland's army numbered less than 20,000 troops[13] but by March 1940, it totaled 41,463.[14] After the collapse of the Low Countries in May 1940, de Valera announced the formation of a paramilitary police force, the Local Security Force. By June 6, 44,870 members had been recruited,[15] and within two months the figure exceeded 148,000.[16] These auxiliary troops combined with the regular army raised the Irish defense forces to 250,000 by the end of the war.[17] Despite this vast recruitment, the Irish army suffered problems that severely impaired its capacity to defend the nation. Due to the rapid expansion of the Irish army, many officers were promoted with only a modicum of experience and the most experienced officers were transferred to training rather than command positions. Only 20,000 of the 148,000 members of the Local Security Force were equipped with weapons and they were seriously limited in their ammunition.[18] The Irish army also suffered from a drastic shortage of essential modern military hardware, such as anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, automatic weapons, artillery, and mortars. Ireland's armored divisions, comprising twenty-nine light armored cars, some of which were twenty years old, were inadequate and obsolete.[19] Despite the huge recruitment drive, the Irish army could not defend the nation and protect its neutrality without the requisite arms and equipment.

The Irish navy was even less prepared for a war when hostilities commenced. Much of this could be attributed to the fact that, since the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, the Royal Navy had been responsible for the defense of Ireland's coasts. It was not until August 29, 1939 that the Marine and Coastwatching Service was established with responsibility for, among other things, defending Ireland's shores against invasion and patrolling Irish territorial

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[13] D. Parsons, 'Mobilisation and Expansion, 1939-40', *The Irish Sword*, 19 (1994), p. 11.
[14] D. Parsons, 'Mobilisation and Expansion, p. 18.
[15] B. Share, *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland, 1939-1945* (Dublin, 1978), p. 58.
[16] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 160.
[17] T. P. Coogan, *Ireland Since the Rising* (London, 1966), p. 88.
[18] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 246.
[19] Gray, *The Lost Years: The Emergency in Ireland, 1939-45*, p. 179.

waters. The Marine and Coastwatching Service immediately set about constructing a chain of 88 look-out posts along the 783 miles of Ireland's coastline. When neutrality was adopted on September 3, 1939, the Marine Service consisted of a former British gunboat, the *Muirchu*, and the equally obsolete ex-British Fisheries Protection vessel, *Fort Rannoch*. They were capable of preventing violations of Irish territorial waters by merchant vessels, but not warships.[20] By December 24, 1942, the Marine Service had acquired a mine planter, a training ship, and six motor torpedo boats. The motor torpedo boats were the only reasonably modern fighting ships, though they too had become obsolete by the time of their acquisition.[21] This rudimentary navy was quite inadequate to protect Ireland's 5,127 square miles of territorial waters and, consequently, there were numerous violations by both German and British ships. The Marine and Coastwatching Service was established in accordance with the Hague Conventions, which obliged Ireland, as a neutral state, to prevent any violations from occurring within its waters or ports. The Irish Marine Service, however, never had the capacity to fulfill this obligation.[22]

The problems faced by the Irish Air Force were typical of those faced by the other branches of the defense forces. By the end of the Emergency, the Irish air force constituted 102 aircraft, thirty-seven of which were training aircraft. Many of the others had been written off for lack of parts and, until the final months of the war, there were no aircraft of modern combat capability.[23] To further complicate matters, the Irish aircraft also suffered from a severe shortage of ammunition and fuel. The impotence of the Irish airforce was demonstrated on May 30, 1941 when the Luftwaffe bombed Dublin, killing thirty-four people, injuring 90 others, and destroying 300 houses. The 1923 Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare required Ireland to use all means at its disposal to prevent violations of Irish airspace by belligerent aircraft and to compel them to land once they encroached.[24] While both British and German aircraft were intercepted when they entered Irish airspace, for the most part, the Irish airforce was incapable of preventing this

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[20] D. Brunicardi, 'The Marine Service', *The Irish Sword*, 19 (1994), p.83.
[21] D. Brunicardi, 'The Marine Service', p.82.
[22] J. B. Scott, (Ed.), *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907* (New York, 1918), p. 210.
[23] A. Quigley, 'Air Aspects of the Emergency', *The Irish Sword*, 19 (1994), p. 90.
[24] A. Roberts, and R. Guelff, (Eds.), *Documents on the Laws of War (2nd ed.)* (Oxford, 1989), p. 131.

from occurring.[25] Royal Air Force (RAF) aircraft frequently overflew Irish headlands and were able to penetrate deeply inland without obstruction. Similarly, German aircraft that bombed British convoys in the Atlantic operated from airfields in north-western France and returned to refueling bases in Norway by flying over Irish airspace.[26]

It was clear that the Irish armed forces were incapable of safeguarding the nation's neutrality against invasion by the belligerent states. After the collapse of the Low Countries, the secretary for external affairs, Joseph Walshe, and the head of Ireland's military intelligence, Colonel Liam Archer, met with the permanent under-secretary of the dominion's office, Sir Eric Machtig, on May 23, 1940, and proposed the idea of a joint defense strategy with Britain to counter a German invasion of Ireland. The next day, a British liaison officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Dudley Clarke, traveled with Walshe to Dublin and met with the Irish Army's chief of staff, General Daniel McKenna, and the minister for the coordination of defensive measures, Frank Aiken, to further discuss military cooperation. They agreed to append a military attaché secretly to the office of the United Kingdom's representative in Ireland, John Maffey, who would liaise between Dublin and the British forces in Northern Ireland and advise the Irish Government on military matters. Also, in the event of a German invasion, Dublin would call for assistance from the general officer commanding (GOC) in Northern Ireland, Lieutenant-General Hubert Huddleston, who had a mobile column on standby to march south into Ireland. In the meantime, the Irish army would render airfields useless, enforce blackouts of Ireland's towns, suppress any IRA uprising and maintain radio communications with Britain. To facilitate this military cooperation, full details were exchanged about the numbers, deployment and equipment of the Irish army and the British troops stationed in Northern Ireland. However, McKenna made it expressly clear to Clarke that the British army would not be

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[25] The Irish ignored British aircraft overflying the Donegal shore of Lough Foyle which was necessary in certain wind conditions for flying boats to take off. Official sanction was never given, nevertheless, Ireland's passivity was in direct violation of Articles 40 and 42 of the 1923 Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare. It was not an occurrence of vital importance to the conduct of the war and, therefore, accession was more prudent than forcing a confrontation; Roberts and Guelff, *Documents on the Laws of War (2nd ed.)*, p. 131; Fanning, *Independent Ireland*, p. 124.

[26] Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow*, p. 567; Quigley, 'Air Aspects of the Emergency', *The Irish Sword*, 19 (1994), p. 90.

permitted to enter Ireland unless and until the Germans invaded. The Irish hoped that this would never eventuate and expected the Royal Navy and the RAF to intercept and halt any invasion before it reached Ireland. These secret contingency plans were legitimized in June and July of 1940, when British intelligence discovered that Germany had made preparations for an invasion of Ireland.[27] Though proposed by the Irish authorities, the joint defense strategy was formulated in response to what seemed to be a real and imminent threat to Ireland of a German invasion. It was not designed to assist the British war effort, nor could it in any way, unless Ireland was forced by a German invasion to become a belligerent in self defense.

Just as contingency plans were put into place to defend against the prospect of a German invasion, they were also prepared to protect against the prospect of British occupation. 'General Defence Plan Number Two' was developed when Churchill's rhetoric against Ireland's neutrality became more vitriolic after the fall of France in June 1940. Irish fears were fuelled by London's persistent refusal to guarantee that Britain would not invade Ireland, along with British obstruction of the Irish Government's efforts to obtain arms. 'General Defence Plan Number Two' called for the Irish armed forces to slow down the British invasion to allow time for German reinforcements to arrive. The Luftwaffe was expected to arrive and neutralize the air advantage of the Allies and, to this end, the Irish army would concentrate defense on strategic airfields and ports. In December 1940, the commander of the Irish Army's second division, General Hugo MacNeil, which was responsible for combating a British invasion, met with the counselor of the German legation, Henning Thomsen, and discussed Irish military plans and the possibility of German assistance to Ireland in the event of a British invasion.[28] It is not clear whether MacNeil was acting upon his own initiative or under direction from superiors, though the latter seems more likely given his military status. Requesting and accommodating German assistance was not inconsistent with Ireland's neutrality policy, considering that contingency plans had already been made with the British. De Valera was sensitive to the adverse diplomatic and press damage that official interaction with Germany attracted and

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[27] *Documents from the National Archives, Dublin, Relating to Ireland's Neutrality Policy.* Department of External Affairs, Secretary's Office. 'Secretary's Notes to the Taoiseach'.

[28] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 252.

so was not averse to covert negotiations. While there was certainly more extensive and detailed cooperation with Britain than with Germany, at the time, this cooperation was the result of the assessment of the probable eventualities, not out of any attempt to assist Britain. The Irish were determined to protect their sovereignty and, in order to achieve this, they formulated plans to defend the nation in concert with both Britain and Germany. Dublin was less candid in expressing its desire for German assistance, but obviously intended to make use of it.

Throughout the Emergency, the British Government used the loss of Allied shipping in the Atlantic to exert pressure on Ireland to relinquish the treaty ports. In the first two weeks after the commencement of hostilities, German submarine attacks resulted in the loss of twenty-eight ships (147,000 tons).[29] On October 14, 1939, a German submarine entered the heavily defended port of Scapa Flow in Scotland and sank the British battleship, *Royal Oak*, killing 786 of the crew. These losses prompted Maffey, on October 21, 1939, to request the port of Berehaven for use by Britain. The Royal Navy sought the Irish port because it was west of the British ports and, thus, was better protected from German submarines and could provide more prolonged escort for convoys into the Atlantic. British pressure for the relinquishment of the treaty ports escalated in November 1940, after the Royal Navy lost 245 vessels in the preceding four months. Churchill responded to these losses in a speech to the House of Commons on November 5, declaring: 'the fact that we cannot use the south and west coasts of Ireland ... is a most heavy and grievous burden, and one which should never have been placed on our shoulders.'[30] These comments sparked off press campaigns in the United States and Britain. An editorial in the *Economist* called upon the British Government to wrest back the ports by force of arms and there were numerous caricatures and cartoons parodying de Valera and Ireland's neutrality. On November7, de Valera responded in a speech to Ireland's Parliament, asserting the sovereignty of Ireland and the right of its government to determine its own foreign policy. Maffey responded to Walshe that Britain would invade Ireland if it was deemed necessary to prevent Britain's defeat.[31]

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[29] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 114.

[30] Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow*, p. 558.

[31] Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow*, p. 558f; *Documents from the National Archives, Dublin, Relating to Ireland'Neutrality Policy*. Department of External Affairs, Secretary's Office. 'Secretary's Notes to Taoiseach'.

When de Valera refused to capitulate to this diplomatic and media pressure, Britain and the United States decided to pursue another course of action. On December 16, 1940, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Kingsley Wood, proposed reprisals against Ireland for the denial of the treaty ports and the concomitant British shipping losses. 'Plan A' was instituted by Britain in January 1941 and was designed to adversely impact upon the Irish economy, but not destroy it. Wood estimated that it would reduce Irish shipping by more than seventy-five percent below its needs. Plan A stopped the Irish from chartering their ships through Britain, along with a warning to other shipping nations to charter ships only to Allied nations and their 'co-operators'.[32] Under the plan, Britain also embargoed the export of certain essential commodities and items to Ireland and froze the nation's foreign reserves to ensure that these necessities could not be obtained elsewhere. As the sanctions began to take their toll, the secretary of the dominion's office, Lord Cranborne, informed Churchill of de Valera's concerns about the damage to Ireland's economy. The official British response insisted that the sanctions were an inevitable result of British shipping losses, not retribution for neutrality. However, correspondence between Churchill and Woods, in December 1940, indicated that the sanctions were employed to coerce cession of the treaty ports.[33] By May 1941, Allied shipping losses exceeded 485,000tons with 228 ships sunk.[34] This prompted American president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, to join with Britain in applying pressure on Ireland to relinquish the treaty ports, attributing responsibility to de Valera for the Allied losses.[35]

Despite de Valera's efforts to achieve autarky, the Irish economy was extremely vulnerable to these sanctions. Ireland had no mineral resources, no developed industries, did not produce enough grain to sustain domestic bread consumption, and was without a merchant fleet.[36] In 1941, prices for basic commodities soared as Ireland suffered shortages of tea, sugar, tobacco, bread, fruit, meat, feeding stuffs, and fertilizers. In order to combat this,

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[32] Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow*, p. 564.
[33] N. P. Quirk, *Sovereignty and Neutrality: Anglo-Irish Relations During World War II* (Unpublished dissertation, Brisbane, 1985), p. 75.
[34] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 153.
[35] R. J. Raymond, 'David Gray, the Aiken Mission and Irish Neutrality: 1940-41', *Diplomatic History*, 9 (1985), p. 69ff.
[36] Gray, *The Lost Years*, p. 33.

the Irish Government introduced general rationing in June 1942. By 1943, Ireland's economy was reduced to twenty-five percent of its tea supply, twenty-two percent of its textiles, twenty percent of its gas, and peat became the common source of fuel because there was no coal available for domestic consumption.[37] Bicycles and horse-drawn carriages were increasingly used, as the lack of gasoline stopped private motoring altogether and reduced public transport services to a minimum. The scarcity caused by the sanctions resulted in huge increases in the incidences of malnutrition and tuberculosis in 1943.[38] As the Irish economy was strangled, unemployment soared, and young Irishmen fled to Britain to find employment in the war industries at a rate of 25,000 per year.[39] The British Government terminated economic treaties that were made at the inception of the war, and designed to be mutually beneficial, when sanctions were implemented. Economic sanctions were enacted to engender suffering in Ireland, which was expected to bring down the Fianna Fail Government, or to compel de Valera to retreat from the policy of neutrality. If the former of these possibilities eventuated, Churchill hoped that someone more amenable to the British position would succeed De Valera.[40] Ultimately, the British and American diplomatic and economic coercion only served to fuel Irish defiance and Ireland's diplomatic relations with the Allied governments to deteriorate. There was no effort to suppress the fact that the sanctions had been imposed, as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) still broadcasted and British papers continued to be sold in Ireland throughout the Emergency. In fact, de Valera exploited the British action to gain considerable support for his government and its policy of neutrality. Editorials criticizing de Valera for his comments were suppressed by the censor for exhibiting disloyalty to Ireland.[41]

Throughout the Emergency, the American press made incessant allegations, which were supported by the American minister in Dublin, David Gray, that Ireland was infested with German spies. In 1944, Gray took advantage of the impending D-Day invasion to reiterate his accusation that the German legation used its radio transmitter to coordinate an espionage network in Ireland. The

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[37] C. J. Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika* (Palo Alto, 1977), p. 63.
[38] R. Dunphy, *The Making of Fianna Fail Power in Ireland, 1923-1948* (Oxford, 1985), p. 223.
[39] R. Dunphy, *Making Fianna Fail*, p. 226.
[40] Quirk, *Sovereignty and Neutrality:*, p. 75.
[41] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 170; O'Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland*, p. 269.

allegation was clearly false, as the Irish Government in December 1943 had confiscated the radio and, by the end of 1942, all the German agents in Ireland had been captured and interned. In fact, in July 1942, Ervin Marlin, an agent of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), had exonerated Ireland of Gray's accusations. Nevertheless, the chief of the counter-espionage branch of the OSS in Europe, Hubert Will, visited Dublin to investigate the matter. He met with Walshe and the head of Ireland's military intelligence, Colonel Bryan, to discuss the possibility of information being leaked to Germany. Will was satisfied with the measures taken, which included, among other things, routing all postal, courier, telegraph, and telegram communications through Britain, where they were subject to the scrutiny of the British secret intelligence service. An additional measure imposed by the British required ships traveling to and from Ireland to obtain navicerts from British consuls. There was undoubtedly cooperation between the intelligence services of Ireland and the OSS, but this did not necessarily constitute a violation of Ireland's neutrality. Neither side divulged more information than was necessary, and cooperation became significant only on issues of counter-espionage.[42] These issues were of mutual self interest and were designed to verify that Ireland's neutrality was not being violated by Axis agents, not to assist the Allied war effort.

Gray's allegation of German spies running rampant in Ireland centered upon the German Legation's use of a secret transmitter. Hempel did, in fact, maintain a secret radio at the Legation, but Irish Military Intelligence had monitored it since early in the war. The German Minister in Dublin had used the transmitter to keep Berlin informed of the organization and deployment of Ireland's army divisions, airforce, and port defenses, as well as deficiencies in the Irish army, such as the lack of weapons. He also provided Berlin with information,which was often incorrect, about the location of munitions factories in Britain and information concerning, IRA contacts, British troop locations, and training grounds in Northern Ireland.[43] In 1941, after complaints from Maffey, Walshe advised Hempel that the Irish Government was aware of the transmitter and insisted that it only be used in emergencies. Hempel continued to use the transmitter, though he did keep his reports brief and infrequent, in order to avoid the

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[42] E. O'Halpin, 'Aspects of Intelligence', *The Irish Sword*, 19 (1994), p. 64.
[43] Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, p. 45.

impression that he was communicating with German vessels of war. Eventually, on December 21, 1943, the Irish Government confiscated the transmitter after having grown tired of Hempel's misuse. De Valera did grant Hempel a great deal of latitude with his use of the transmitter. This was probably because all postal, courier, telegraph, and telegram communications were routed through Britain and subject to the scrutiny of the British Secret Intelligence Service. It was certainly an advantage to the British, but one of geography and not of Ireland's making. Irish Military Intelligence's monitoring of Hempel's use of the transmitter was not an un-neutral or pro-British act, because the Hague Conventions bound neutral governments to exercise 'such surveillance as the means at its disposal' to prevent violations of the conventions from occurring in their waters.[44] Among other things, this involved ensuring that the transmitter was not used to communicate with belligerent vessels at sea or with German agents in Ireland. After numerous warnings from the Irish Government, Hempel refused to reform his use of the transmitter and, subsequently, had it confiscated. Dublin acted to protect Irish neutrality by ensuring that Ireland was not used as a base of operations against Britain, rather than to assist the British war effort. This position was reinforced when the Irish Government immediately ordered the removal of a Czech agent, working for the exiled Czech Government in London, who was posing as a waiter in the German Legation, the moment it became aware of him.[45]

Northern Ireland's membership of the United Kingdom caused some dilemmas for Ireland's neutrality. On the night of April 15, 1941, 700 citizens were killed, and immense destruction caused, when the Luftwaffe bombed Belfast. As the bombs rained down, the security minister of Northern Ireland, John MacDermott, called Dublin requesting assistance. De Valera immediately dispatched thirteen units of the Dublin fire brigade to help douse the flames devouring Belfast. The dispatch of the fire crews to Northern Ireland may have ostensibly appeared to have been a breach of neutrality, but the relationship between Ireland and Northern Ireland was a complex one. The Irish Constitution of 1937 claimed sovereignty over the Province of Ulster, which it considered to be forcibly and unjustly incorporated into the United Kingdom. Thus, the assistance in dousing fires in Northern Ireland

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[44] Scott, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907*, p. 214.
[45] Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, p. 29.

was not perceived in Ireland to be of assistance to the British, or a breach of neutrality, because many of those suffering in Northern Ireland were Catholics who considered themselves to be Irish and living under British rule by duress. The bombs had not distinguished between Catholic and Protestant, or Nationalist and Unionist. Hempel informed de Valera that he understood the Irish Government's position and did not register a protest about its response to the bombing of Belfast.[46]

The Irish Government's policy towards Northern Ireland remained consistent throughout the war. On 4 April 1941, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, John Andrews, wrote to the British home secretary, Herbert Morrison, seeking to have conscription extended to Northern Ireland to fulfill the state's obligation of 'equality of sacrifice'.[47] Churchill was initially supportive of the measure, as conscription was already in place throughout the rest of the United Kingdom. But the governments in both Belfast and London underestimated opposition to the proposal. The Irish Government and the Catholic Church protested vehemently at what they insisted was conscription of people who considered themselves to be Irish rather than British. The Catholic bishops of Northern Ireland denounced Churchill's proposal of conscription and, with the Nationalist Members of Parliament, drafted an anti-conscriptionist pledge to be signed in all churches of Northern Ireland. On May23, the Irish high commissioner in London, John Dulanty protested to Morrison, pointing out that the introduction of conscription would evoke resistance from nationalists and the imprisonment of opponents would inevitably exacerbate IRA violence. Despite this opposition to the proposal, Andrews, and four of his Ministers met with Churchill in London to persuade him to implement conscription. Churchill intended to support conscription until Morrison sought the opinion of the inspector-general of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), Lieutenant-Colonel Wickham, who had accompanied the Stormont contingent. Wickham admitted that Catholics would be disproportionably represented in conscription because they had less employment in the exempted occupations, which included engineering, aircraft production, and ship construction. He predicted that Catholics would flee conscription to Ireland, where they would be regarded as heroes, and this would deteriorate

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46 Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 498.
47 Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 512.

Protestant support for conscription as they were forced to bear the burden alone.[48] Wickham's analysis of the situation persuaded Churchill to relent and terminate the proposal. Though the Irish Government did protest against the recruitment of troops in a belligerent Union, it was a move that was consistent with its relations with Northern Ireland. Also, though the Irish Government was the most vocal opponent of conscription, the governments of Canada and the United States joined it. Nevertheless, ultimately, the British Government made its decision based upon the potential reactions in Northern Ireland, not the interests of the Irish Government. Churchill informed Dulanty that he was not interested in the adverse ramifications conscription would provoke in Ireland, because he was preoccupied by affairs elsewhere in the world.[49]

An even more problematic issue for the Irish Government was its policy for internment of belligerent aircrews and sailors in Ireland. On September 3, 1939, about ten minutes after Churchill announced that Britain had declared war on Germany, two RAF seaplanes set down in Irish territory. They were deemed to be 'distressed mariners' and were permitted to leave.[50] De Valera censored the incident, but protested to Maffey and warned that recurrences of the situation would not be tolerated. At this time, de Valera was informed that another RAF seaplane had landed in Irish waters earlier that morning with a mechanical problem. It escaped just as de Valera was informing Maffey that the aircrew would have to be interned. Despite de Valera's protests, these were not isolated incidents and Allied aircraft that landed in Clare, Sligo, and Donegal were refueled and allowed to continue on their way.[51] In 1943, Walshe acknowledged that the Irish Government's policy was to intern only servicemen engaged in acts of war, which he claimed was the common practice of neutrality.[52] However, the 1923 Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare did not allow for such a liberal interpretation of international law. They bound neutral governments to use all means at their disposal to intern belligerent

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[48] Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow*, p. 587.
[49] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 512f.
[50] T. R. Dwyer, *Guests of the State: The Story of Allied and Axis Servicemen Interned in Ireland During World War Two* (Dingle, 1994), p. 11.
[51] Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, p. 84.
[52] Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, p. 85.

aircraft and crews, "after having alighted for any reason whatsoever."[53]

Dublin's clarification of policy only encouraged the British Government to attempt to secure the release of its interned servicemen. In 1943, after four Allied servicemen were released to Northern Ireland on compassionate grounds, the British Government pressured the Irish Government to release all the internees. De Valera responded that Ireland's impartial neutrality policy would demand the release of all German, as well as Allied servicemen. Maffey and the Canadian High Commissioner in Dublin, John Kearney, proposed that the Irish Government apply the non-operational flight ruling, retroactively, to the interned servicemen. On October 18, 1943, the Irish Government acceded and twenty Allied airmen were released to Northern Ireland. This concession, and the success of the Allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, prompted Maffey to bring heavy diplomatic pressure to bear upon de Valera for the release of the remaining eleven servicemen. De Valera was determined to reaffirm the sovereignty of Ireland and informed Maffey that he would not yield on the issue. Maffey warned of 'unforeseeable complications' if the Irish Government remained intransigent.[54] De Valera was not prepared to suffer renewed deprivation from another wave of economic sanctions, in order to preserve an impartial neutrality in a war that was all but won. On June 15, 1944, the eight remaining Allied internees were secretly released to Northern Ireland.[55] Altogether, forty-five Allied servicemen were interned and later released, with an additional 228 others allowed to leave the country unobstructed.[56] In contrast, none of the 223 interned Germans were released.[57] Though extracted under duress, this was a clear violation of the conventions of neutrality that the Irish Government had invoked when establishing its neutrality policy in 1939.

American and British pressure on Ireland to renounce its neutrality increased as they gained the upper hand in the war in Europe. On February 21 and 22, 1944, the American and British notes were delivered to the Irish Government demanding, as a

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[53] Roberts and Guelff, *Documents on the Laws of War*, p. 131.
[54] Dwyer, *Guests of the State:*, p. 179.
[55] Three of the remaining eleven had been released earlier on compassionate grounds.
[56] O'Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland*, p. 103.
[57] *Documents from the National Archives, Dublin, Relating to Ireland's Neutrality Policy*. Department of External Affairs, Secretary's Office. 'Position of German and Japanese Nationals in Ireland During War'.

minimum, the expulsion of the Axis diplomatic and consular officials and, preferably, the severance of all diplomatic relations with these nations. Gray insisted that these officials were in a position to facilitate espionage in the lead up to Operation *Overlord*, the plan for the Allied invasion of landing at Normandy. On March11, De Valera responded to the Note by stating: 'We have done all we could to prevent espionage directed against your interests and we can do and will do no more.'[58] Two days later, Britain retaliated by banning all travel to and from Ireland and, in April, withdrawing telephone services and imposing an embargo on the export of all newspapers to Ireland. The British Government claimed that the measures were not punitive, but were aimed at ensuring that information about Operation *Overlord* was not leaked from the German Legation. Roosevelt and the American secretary of state, Cordell Hull, wanted to implement further sanctions against Ireland, but acceded to the British position because the nation lay within the British sphere of influence. The American and British media campaigns vilifying Irish neutrality, which had long been accusing the Axis diplomats of facilitating espionage in Ireland, were given added impetus by the actions of the American and British governments. One opinion poll indicated that thirty-eight percent of Americans supported the implementation of economic sanctions against Ireland, with a further thirty-five percent advocating military intervention to ensure that the Irish Government capitulated.[59]

The American and British notes had more to do with embarrassing the Irish Government than with preventing the leaking of information. The Irish Government had already taken sufficient measures to ensure that the diplomats were not in a position to facilitate espionage. No vital information had been sent from Dublin throughout the war, no spy network existed and the IRA had been suppressed.[60] In 1944, the German Legation consisted of eight persons and the Japanese Consulate was comprised of three.[61] In contrast, the staff level of the British Office constituted three prior to the inception of the war,

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[58] Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow*, p. 601.
[59] J. Bowman, *De Valera and the Ulster Question: 1917-1973* (Oxford, 1989), p. 252.
[60] Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, p. 81.
[61] *Documents from the National Archives, Dublin, Relating to Ireland's Neutrality Policy*. Department of External Affairs, Secretary's Office. 'Position of German and Japanese Nationals in Ireland During War'.

increasing to thirty-six in 1942 and seventy-seven by 1945.[62] The German Legation had no staff increase since the war began and accusations that it controlled an espionage network in Ireland were clearly ludicrous. All post, passenger ships, and communications were routed through Britain and were subject to Britain's Secret Intelligence Service's scrutiny. Subsequently, the German, Italian, and Japanese representatives did not send or receive diplomatic bags throughout the course of the war, nor did they engage couriers.[63] The radio transmitter in the German legation had been confiscated by the Irish Government months prior to the dispute, because de Valera was determined that it would not be used to provide intelligence to Berlin. The American and British notes only strengthened de Valera's resolve and made him even more committed to protecting Ireland's sovereignty and neutrality. His reversion to a stringent and independent application of neutrality was a result of his humiliation at his capitulation to American and British bullying over the issue of interned servicemen. De Valera was eager to reinforce the fact that Ireland was a neutral nation and that this neutrality did not end merely because the Axis was losing the war in Europe.

After Operation *Overlord* had been executed, Allied pressure continued to build upon Ireland to abandon its neutrality. On 30 April at 12:30 pm, Gray requested that de Valera allow him to seize the archives in the German Legation. The war had not ended and the German dictator, Adolf Hitler, was still alive, though he would commit suicide two hours later. Gray was eager to seize information, particularly pertaining to submarine warfare, before Hempel had the opportunity to destroy it. Walshe informed him that the Irish Government would not cooperate in such a fashion until Germany surrendered.[64] Collusion with the Allied nations over this issue, before the war had ended, would have been a clear violation of Ireland's neutrality.

Later that same day, De Valera and Walshe, against the advice of their advisers, called upon Hempel to express their sympathies for the death of Hitler. It was the same treatment that had been

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[62] *Documents from the National Archives, Dublin, Relating to Ireland's Neutrality Policy*. Department of External Affairs, Secretary's Office. 'Position of German and Japanese Nationals in Ireland During War'.

[63] *Documents from the National Archives, Dublin, Relating to Ireland's Neutrality Policy*. Department of External Affairs, Secretary's Office. 'Position of German and Japanese Nationals in Ireland During War'.

[64] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 534f.

shown to President Truman upon the death of Roosevelt earlier that same month.[65] De Valera justified his action on the basis that international protocol demanded the act of courtesy upon the death of the head of state of a nation. He also argued that diplomatic protocol was shown to all nations, irrespective of whether or not the Irish Government agreed with their national policies. De Valera explained to the Irish minister in Washington, Robert Brennan, that Hempel, in contrast to Gray, demonstrated impeccable conduct throughout the war.[66] Ultimately, de Valera's stance had little to do with Hempel's diplomatic decorum, which was certainly a stark contrast to Gray's, but was not as irreproachable as de Valera suggested.[67] De Valera's call upon Hempel was more likely to have been aimed at reminding Britain and the United States that Ireland was a sovereign nation and they had no right to expect capitulation from neutral states. He was sending the message that Ireland was neutral because it was the will of the Irish Parliament, not because Britain or the United States gave the nation permission.

Throughout the course of the war, the huge number of Irish citizens that had enlisted in the British forces embarrassed the Irish Government. Dominion Office memoranda in 1945 and 1946 estimated the figure to be approximately 40,000[68], though 50,000 is generally regarded to be more accurate.[69] Seven of these Irishmen were awarded the Victoria Cross and even though Ireland was a neutral, this constituted the highest representation in proportion to population of any Commonwealth nation.[70] Despite this high representation and distinction of neutral citizens in a belligerent army, the enlistments did not violate Irish neutrality. The Hague Conventions distinguish between the conduct of governments and individuals and permit the enlistment of neutral nationals in belligerent armies, provided that the neutral government does not facilitate it.[71] There were no restrictions against Irish citizens enlisting in either the German or British armies, however, recruiting posters and agencies were forbidden in Ireland. As an additional provision to distance the enlistments

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[65] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 535.
[66] The Earl of Longford, & T. P. O'Neil, *Eamon de Valera* (Boston, 1971), p. 411; Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 535ff.
[67] Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, p. 40; Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 158.
[68] Fisk, *In Time of War*, p. 523.
[69] Dunphy, *Making Fianna Fail*, p. 281.
[70] Coogan, *Ireland Since the Rising*, p. 89.
[71] Scott, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907*, p. 134.

from the Irish Government, Irish citizens serving in the British army were required to dress in civilian clothes when on leave in Ireland.[72]

The Irish Government believed that proactive policies were necessary to avoid Ireland's neutrality being exploited to assist a belligerent. On numerous occasions Dublin was compelled by geographic and economic circumstances to demonstrate 'certain consideration' for Britain.[73] This does not mean that as some critics have suggested, on those occasions, Ireland violated its neutrality to assist Britain or that Ireland was 'benevolently neutral', a 'neutral ally' or exhibited 'secret benevolence' in its relations with Britain.[74] These epithets misrepresent the nature of Ireland's relationship with Britain. The inability of the Irish armed forces to protect its neutrality put the onus on the Irish Government to ensure that the belligerent states were not motivated to violate Irish neutrality. The Irish Government's suppression of the IRA, arrest of German agents, formulation of contingency military plans and confiscation of Hempel's radio were not designed to assist Britain or to hinder Germany in the war. In fact, they were designed to ensure that no nation capitalized on Ireland's neutrality, military weakness and geographical situation to use it as a base of operations or intelligence against another. On most occasions, these measures were implemented to protect Ireland's neutrality from Germany, but this was merely recognition of the geographical reality that Ireland was strategically positioned to hurt Britain, rather than Germany.

There were certainly occasions in which the Irish violated their neutrality, but these were exceptions that were not volunteered but extracted under extreme duress. The most damning of these violations involved the discriminate release of Allied servicemen from internment that was coerced with threats of renewed economic sanctions. Considering the extent of the pressure brought to bear by Britain and the United States, it is remarkable that Ireland did not violate its neutrality on more occasions. The historic ambiguity of the citizenship of the Catholic population, residing in Northern Ireland, also posed a dilemma to the Irish Government. The neutrality of Ireland was evidenced by the

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[72] Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, p. 64ff.
[73] The Earl of Longford & O'Neil, *Eamon de Valera*, p. 348.
[74] J. J. Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 244; Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, Acknowledgments; Dwyer, *Guests of the State*, p.23.

consistency with which this issue was dealt, as Dublin sent fire fighting crews to help douse fires in Belfast and protested against the conscription of residents of Northern Ireland.

World War II demonstrated that it was impossible to enforce the international laws of neutrality and, thus, it has become generally accepted that the Hague Conventions are obsolete. The dilemma with the international law governing neutrality was that it relied on self-restraint by belligerents. This left the neutrals in an extremely vulnerable position and inclined to compromise their neutral responsibilities in order to preserve their independence. The progression of World War II was evidence of this propensity; revealing that military might and strategic expediency were the paramount determinants of the continued existence of neutrality. As Germany achieved hegemony over continental Europe, neutral nations acceded to its demands, but when the Allies gained the ascendancy in 1943, the neutral nations made concessions to them. Ireland's maintenance of neutrality throughout World War II had more to do with the fact that the United States, Britain and Germany permitted it to exist, than with Dublin's adherence to the responsibilities of neutrality.

The Axis and Allies both formulated plans to invade Ireland that never eventuated because they were deemed to have been strategically unsound. With the dominance of the British navy and the proximity of British troops and airfields, the Axis could not have held Ireland against a counter-invasion that would have been assisted by the Irish. Britain ruled out seizure of Ireland's treaty ports because it would have devastated its goodwill with the American public and damaged the prospect of the United States joining the Allies. After the United States became a belligerent in December 1941, the pressure on Ireland to rescind its neutrality increased, even though the threat of invasion diminished. Though coercion was employed, it was in the form of diplomatic, economic, and media pressure which, ultimately, allowed the Irish Government to determine its own policy. Had this coercion become military, as in the case of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Ireland's neutrality would have ended. The duress employed by Britain and the United States for Ireland to rescind its neutrality demonstrated that, when their existences were at stake, great powers did not respect the neutrality of their neighbours.

When assessing the integrity of the implementation of neutrality it must be kept in mind that neutrality is not defined merely by abstention from war, but by adherence to the rights and

responsibilities prescribed by international law and national neutrality policies. Thus, the viability of neutrality is dependent on more than just defense of the neutral state's territory, but also on resisting demands that are incompatible with the responsibilities of neutrality. The degree to which a neutral nation can achieve this is determined by its individual circumstances. Ireland was vulnerable because of the weakness of its armed forces and, subsequently, Dublin was compelled to make concessions to Britain to preserve its neutrality. But these were minor concessions and, for the most part, Ireland adhered to its policy of neutrality. A single violation (or even several violations) of a neutrality policy that is otherwise consistent does not annul that neutrality. Neutrality is only relinquished if violations become frequent and develop into a pattern - a pattern resembling alignment.[75]

It should be noted that no nation has ever been successful in conforming with absolute and complete adherence to the responsibilities of neutrality. Capitulation to the commitment of a minor violation was always preferable to the prospect of a total loss of independence that could follow punitive action. Nevertheless, it is consistency in policy implementation that determines the credibility of the appearance of the propriety of neutrality. Aberrant lapses of policy occurred when states were subjected to internal or external pressures which jeopardized the continued existence of that state if the policy of neutrality was adhered to. In this sense, the consistency of a neutrality policy was largely determined by the vacillation in pressures exerted on a state, whereas the intention behind that policy lay exclusively with the sovereignty of the state. Ireland's neutrality policy was formulated with the intention of conforming to the Hague Conventions and its implementation in regard to this objective was largely, but not always, successful.

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[75] Nevertheless, belligerent states can cite any violation as justification for punitive action against the neutral nation. However, such transgressions may justify but never motivate foreign policy which is invariably dictated by strategic considerations; S. Lindberg, 'Are We Counting our Chickens?' *Yearbook of Finnish Foreign Policy*, 12 (1984), p. 6.

The Priest and the Tsaricide

Claudia Verhoeven

In 1866, after Dmitry Karakozov had fired his gun at Alexander II, Tsar of Russia, Alexander Herzen engaged in a discursive battle with Count Mikhail Nikolaevich Murav'ev, head of the Investigative Committee into the Karakozov case, who had spoken of Karakozov's tsaricide as an "unheard of" crime in Russia. In his émigré journal, *Kolokol* (*The Bell*), Herzen retorted that there was nothing "unheard of" about tsaricide in Russia and listed the murders of Tsarevich Dmitry (1591), Dmitry the Pretender (1606), Boris Godunov and his son (1605), Tsarevich Aleksei (1718), Peter III (1762), and Paul I (1801) as evidence.[1] But what the official had understood, and Herzen had failed to notice, was that there was actually something qualitatively different, something *modern* indeed about Karakozov's attempt on the life of Alexander II. Herzen's list of tsaricides consists exclusively of members of the upper echelons of society whose assassinations took place in private spheres inaccessible to the Russian public. Karakozov, contrarily, was a civilian trying to murder a Russian autocrat in public. And with that one shot, Karakozov not only challenged the state's monopoly on violence, but he also forced officialdom into a highly undesirable dialogue on the nature of political legitimacy with the most radical elements of Russian society. It is this dialogue (actually a cacophony of voices, gestures, and acts from across Russian society) and its ability to shape the world that I analyze in my dissertation.

What is fascinating about Dmitry Karakozov: Unlike the 1881 tsaricides, easily classifiable after several years of systematic terrorist acts, Karakozov was unexpected and misunderstood. And thus, during the four months between his failed attempt on the life of Alexander II and his public execution, Dmitrii Karakozov and

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[1] See Alexander Herzen, "Pol'sha v Sibiri k Karakozovskoe delo, *Sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Moscow: 1954-65), Vol. XIX: 130.

his "unheard of" act became the subject of a cacophonous discursive onslaught. It is difficult indeed to resist approaching Karakozov solely as a *tabula rasa* onto which various segments of Russian society inscribed their cultural fears, assumptions, and (sometimes) hopes.[2] But this risks burying Karakozov underneath mountains of script and reducing a polyphonous Russian society to an amalgam of non-referential signifiers. Instead, in what follows, I explore what we can learn about the world of one man, Archpriest Vassili Polisadov, as he wrote not just about Karakozov, but also about talking at and talking with Karakozov.

On the very day of Dmitrii Karakozov's failed assassination attempt, April 4, 1866, Count Dmitry Tolstoy, future minister of interior, was asked to recommend "a priest for a discussion of today's criminal."[3] Tolstoy did not elaborate on the nature of the discussion and we note that he did not write "discussion *with* today's criminal." A few days later, an invitation was sent to Vassili Polisadov, Archpriest of Peter-Paul Cathedral, located on the grounds of the Peter-Paul Fortress in Saint Petersburg. Until September 3, when Karakozov was publicly hanged, Polisadov arguably spent more time with him than anyone else. The historical record has not preserved the details of their discussions, but we do have memoranda of intentions and results.

> The first time we get an indication of the purpose of discussions between priest and criminal is in a letter from Engineer-General Sorokin, Governor of Peter-Paul Fortress, to the Chief of Staff of the Department of the Gendarmes and Administrator of the Third Section (the Tsarist secret police), Nikolai Vladimirovich Mezentsev. Sorokin reports that, despite "the strong prohibition" against admittance to the cells of criminals held in Alekseevskii Ravelin, he had permitted Archpriest Polisadov and Colonel Losev to meet with Karakozov privately, "keeping in mind . . . the goal of *raz'iasnenie prestupleniia* (an explanation of the crime)."[4] Since the time of Peter the Great, priests were

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[2] In light of the 1863 Polish rebellion, much of the public immediately assumed that Karakozov was in league with the Polish faction, officialdom supposed that he was acting for the popular radical, Chernyshevsky, and segments of the peasantry believed Karakozov represented the interests of the nobility, etc.

[3] *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi federatsii* (GARF), f.109, op. 1, d. 268.

[4] GARF f. 109, op. 1, d. 100 ch. 1, l. 24.

required by law, at the penalty of losing their robes, to inform the authorities of information related to crimes revealed during confession. In all likelihood, this is what Sorokin had in mind when he wrote of *raz'iasnenie prestupleniia*, especially since, at this time; Murav'ev's Investigative Committee was still far from having completed its investigation into the circumstances surrounding the crime. Sorokin's report, however, was a direct response to Mezentsev's request that Sorokin allow Polisadov and Losev access to Karakozov "at any time," but the request neither mentioned a *raz'iasnenie prestupleniia*, nor suggested that Polisadov and Losev meet with Karakozov privately.[5] So we turn to Polisadov's April 23 report of his first visit:

The first time [I visited him] - for a simple conversation (dlia prostogo sobesedovaniia), and the second - for a service that included a water purification ceremony, after which, in accordance with the ceremony, a speech was held (skazana byla rech') about the relationship between ceremony and faith, the visible and invisible, the natural and supernatural, with the goal of arousing in him faith in God, invisible judge of our life and merciful father, who is always prepared to forgive the sincerely repenting sinner, and whose power it is, through the ways of the church, to purge his soul and elevate her to a state like that of angels.

As far the future is concerned, I intend to visit the criminal three times a week - and if You will permit it, then even more frequently - mornings from 9 - 10 and evenings around 6 -7. It will be useful to report to Your Excellency that each visit will begin with a private service (Liturgies in the mornings; Vespers in the

[5] GARF f. 109, op. 1, d. 100 ch. 1, l. 16ob. It is very difficult to discover from the archival sources whose request Mezentsev is passing on. Most likely, he is following the instructions of Count Shuvalov, Chief of the Gendarmes and Head of the Third Section. But there is a slight possibility that the orders came from Alexander II himself, as someone (Sorokin?), in one report, requests explicit permission from the emperor for allowing Polisadov and Losev into Karakozov's cell. Curiously enough, however, that particular source is neither addressed to anyone, nor signed by anyone, which is very unusual for these types of sources, usually meticulously written on official stationary. GARFf. 109, op. 1, d. 100 ch. 1, l. 18.

> evenings) and finish with a sermon, different each time, but all on the theme that the Lord Christ extends his merciful embrace to each sinner, having sincerely repented, and on the terms of a sincere repentance. At the time of these activities I will be in sacerdotal robes, and the criminal needs to be on his feet.[6]

All the talk occurred in accordance with official church regulations: Ceremonies, rituals, speeches, sermons, Polisadov in sacerdotal robes, and Karakozov, for hours on end, on his feet, being talked at.

In the next paragraph, however, Polisadov writes, "After that," that is, after all the church formalities, "I will talk with (*besedovat' s*) the criminal specifically about his great crime, inducing him to an *otkrovennoe ob'iasnenie* (an open/unconcealed explanation/declaration)." He adds, "If he reveals to me something suitable for the *sudebnogo raz'iasneniia ego prestupleniia* (judicial/court explanation of his crime), I will ask and persuade him to inform whomever it may concern about everything."[7] First, Polisadov strips the dialogue of certain formalities: "After that (the activities requiring that Polisadov will be in sacerdotal robes and Karakozov on his feet)" implies that, during what follows, those regulations no longer apply. Second, we note that the use of the verb *besedovat' s* eases the formality of the situation, as it means "to talk/converse with"; it is, in fact, the first time Karakozov is being talked *with* (the verb takes the instrumental *s: s prestupnikom.*) (Note also use of the word *sobesedovanie* above in *prostogo sobesedovaniia*, simple conversation.) Additionally, Polisadov seems to differentiate between the *otkrovennoe ob'iasnenie* and the *sudebnoe raz'iasnenie*, suggesting that the relevance of the discussions stretches beyond whatever details reveal themselves as suitable for the court.[8]

In the next paragraph, Polisadov distances himself even further from his bureaucratic superiors:

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[6] Polisadov's April 23 report to Sorokin, GARFf. 109, op. 1, d.100 ch. 1; ll. 25-26.
[7] Polisadov's April 23 report to Sorokin, GARFf. 109, op. 1, d.100 ch. 1; ll. 25-26.
[8] The content suggests this, but there is also a subtle difference between *ob'iasnenie* and *raz'iasnenie*, the first being tied to confession or a clearing, the latter specifically meaning explanation. (Note also: vb. *ob'iasnit'*, to explain; adv. *iasno*, clear.) Additionally, considering the laws related to confession, Polisadov's qualification of the statement with "if" and "ask and persuade" is telling.

> But in order not to appear to him like a person who is, however spiritual, too official or even an investigative police officer, I wish, in my personal conversations with him (*v chastnykh moikh s nim sobesedovaniiakh*), to enter into a discussion (*rassuzhdenie*: reasoning, debate, argument, discourse) about science, literature, art, their various directions, and finally [about] when science and literature act beneficially and when destructively on the young generation and society. Also I would hope to permit myself to discuss (*rassuzhdat'*: to reason, discuss, debate, argue) the social condition of society. All these discussions (that is, about science, literature, art, society), in a strict Christian and conservative direction, will have the goal of changing the mind of the criminal, of changing the ruinous theories from which sprang, in my opinion, his crime, and which he, of course, has not yet repudiated.[9]

Here, Polisadov is proposing a dialogue with Karakozov. Yes, "in a strict Christian and conservative direction," but the fact that he even mentions this suggests there are other, competing perspectives on these issues. What will Polisadov and Karakozov discussing after the sermons? Science, literature, art, society, and theory. And what is particularly interesting is that on April 23, that is nearly 3 weeks after his arrest and numerous, torturous police interrogations, Karakozov, who has been historiographically branded a mentally unstable half-wit, "of course, has not yet repudiated [the ruinous theory]". Discussion or debate on subjects of the nature proposed by Polisadov does not take place with someone who is mentally deranged. If Polisadov is asking for permission to dialogue with Karakozov, he must think there exists a possibility that dialogue be fruitful. Polisadov's goal, which has little to do with elucidating details of the crime, consists in nothing less than changing Karakozov's mind and theories (towards repentance) through dialogue.

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[9] When two people *rassushdat'*, the term has the meaning of debate or argue. When one person employs the verb for him/herself, it implies that he/she will expound on or discuss a subject in detail. The latter seems to be implied the second time Polisadov uses the term ("I hope to permit myself to *rassushdat'*. . . "), but in the context of "I want in my personal *sobesedovaniiakh* with him to enter into *rassushdeniia* . . . " it is clear that there will take place an exchange of ideas.

Polisadov concludes his letter with the suggestion that, "In order to invoke the criminal to a frank explanation with me (*iskrennoe ob'iasnenie so mnoi*), it would be useful if the guard and his assistants let us talk privately (*dozvoliali nam besedovat' na iedine*)."[10] Thus, we find the request for the private meetings that reappears, this time approved, in Sorokin's report to Mezentsev. But it is clear that Polisadov's idea of the content and purpose of these visits differs from that of the officials.

Now we skip ahead a few months to the day after Karakozov's public execution, September 4, when Polisadov sat down and penned the following letter to Count Peter Alekseevich Shuvalov, Chief of the Gendarmes and Head of the Third Section.

> Your Highness, Worshipful Sire, Count Peter Andreevich!
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> Yesterday, when, having performed the last pastoral duty for the criminal Karakozov, I moved away towards a group of people standing on a special podium, one of the military gentlemen asked me, "Did the criminal sincerely repent?" to which I laconically replied, "That is the confessor's secret."
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> That reply was given by me because I really did not recognize You (Your appearance has changed a lot, High Count), and because a clearer and more satisfactory answer would also be heard by someone in the dense group and be interpreted in a manner unfavorable for my pastoral modesty.
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> Soon after that they told me that Your Highness had put that question.
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> Knowing what great assistance you have shown me in the pastoral guidance of Karakozov, I hasten to satisfy Your Highness's wish, expressed in Your question: Did he repent sincerely? Not in the least frightened to violate the Divine seal of Confession, I can announce - to Your Highness or anyone who asks me about Karakozov's last days, not out of sheer curiosity, but out of a Christian concern for his soul and

[10] I don't know if he had in mind a prison guard or Colonel Losev, whom Polisadov never mentions in his reports.

eternal fate, - that the criminal died with salvific Christian moods, beliefs, and feelings. And, that upon hearing his detailed, most seriously conducted confession, in my soul slumbered a weight that had been pressuring me especially in recent times on account of a thought that consistently pursued me, - will the distinctive will of this grave criminal entirely give itself up to my guidance and will he fulfill the terms of a Christian confession? Of course, in the words of the Apostle Paul: What man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? (*1 Corinthians 2, 11*) and in the words of the Prophet, only God feels the heart and the insides of people. But all the same, Karakozov's overall conduct over the last days allows me to preserve the persuasion that his confession was not given superficially, so that I, relieved in my conscience, thanked the Lord Jesus for saving the lost sheep and decided to give Karakozov the holy confirmation of Christ, towards eternal life.

The comforting result of my efforts to save Karakozov's soul I owe to Your Highness, and to Your predecessor Prince Andreevich, who gave me the right to go into the cell of the criminal and, what had never before been permitted, to talk with him privately. That was in April. Consequently, since mid-June, of course with Your permission, they took Karakozov to the Kommendantsky Church for the divine service; even though I did not have the possibility to properly converse with the criminal about the ulcers of his soul, I had the possibility to preach the New Testament with respect to his condition. All that gave me the possibility to turn Karakozov towards better, salvific feelings. Giving Your Highness the humblest gratitude for your timely and kind assistance in my difficult service to the benefit of the soul of the great but repentant sinner, I dare to hope that Your Excellency will not abandon me [and deny me his] assistance with respect to other political arrests kept in Alekseevskii ravelin and in prison. As for me, I am wholeheartedly ready to serve the good and salvation of their souls.

All-humble, diligent, and devout,
Vassili Polisadov, Archpriest of Peter-Paul Cathedral.[11]

This letter consists of more than a simple, if tense, apologia. In what follows, I would like to suggest a reading of Polisadov's short passage from the scaffold towards the podium as a metaphor for his hazardous dwelling simultaneously in two conflicting realms, namely the world of spirit and the world of the flesh, or of God and Man. Since it is in the midst of this passage that Polisadov commits his *faux pas*, we will start with a reconstruction of what happened that day.

Polisadov has just completed the last rites for a repentant criminal (with whom he has spent a lot of time over the last few months). We imagine him solemnly descending from the scaffold and still wrapped up in the ceremony of the occasion when "one of the military men" calls out, "*Did he repent sincerely?*" at a volume loud enough for Polisadov to worry that his own response will be overheard by the dense crowd. Polisadov understands the question as bad form and curtly retorts with, "That is the confessor's secret," which may have multiple meanings, but in the context of the occasion could easily be interpreted as the equivalent of "that is none of your business." He has his protocol, too, and within the spheres of religion and etiquette, the Archpriest may be quite correct. But he forgets where he is: After the ceremony, after his descent from the platform, after his movement towards the crowd, Polisadov walks in the world, and among men of the world. Misfortune dictates that the one he arrogantly dismisses happens to be a high official and his superior.

The actions that follow are easily understood: Shuvalov's identity is revealed to Polisadov, who then hastens to apologize, lest all the privileges he has gained over the last few months be taken from him again.[12] The content of the letter thus reads as follows: After all you've done for me, yes, I will tell you; yes, he died a Christian; I was worried for a while (after all, who but God really knows what goes on inside a person's mind?), but the criminal's behavior indicated that he was sincere, so I gave him his

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[11] Polisadov's September 3 letter to Shuvalov, GARFf. 109, op. 1, d. 100 ch. 1; '.112-113ob.

[12] "I really did not recognize You (Your appearance has changed a lot)" is, of course, a terrible excuse, indicative only of the fact that *had* Shuvalov been but "one of the military men" he would certainly never have received Polisadov's letter.

last sacraments. Thus emerges what I believe Polisadov intended to communicate to Shuvalov: A portrait of a humble priest who may have momentarily forgotten himself, but essentially knows his place in a strict hierarchy. There is no doubt about the respective placement of the count Shuvalov and the priest Polisadov: "Your Highness, all you've done for me, what had never been allowed before, please do not deny me your assistance in the future, etc." Read with this slant, the citation from *1 Corinthians* further deflates any impressions of false pride. In contrast to the arrogance of the previous day ("that is the confessor's secret"), Polisadov now presents an image of humility ("what man knows . . . but the spirit of man . . . only God . . . "). Polisadov not only hesitates to express certainty on the state of Karakozov's soul, he also relegates responsibility for its salvation to the Count. In the end, Shuvalov made salvation possible, while Polisadov merely performed a service that was expected of him, as a servant of state, church, and God.[13]

A very different Polisadov stares us in the face, however, when we check his reference to *1 Corinthians*, Chapter 2:

> 1. When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom.
> 2. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
> 3. And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling;
> 4. and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
> 5. that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

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[13] He responds, in fact, as if guiding Karakozov towards sincere repentance had been his explicitly assigned task all along, which, professionally, it had been, of course, but it's not clear that the high officials of the secret police had this in mind when they assigned him to the Karakozov case. And he responds *as if* he assumes Shuvalov's question to have been sincere, which is not obvious considering the qualifying sentence, "not out of sheer curiosity, but out of a Christian concern for his soul and eternal fate", which grammatically seems tied to "anyone who asks about Karakozov's last days", that is, anyone of a crowd, but before Shuvalov's identity was revealed as more than "a military man" he, too, was part of the curious crowd.

6. Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.
7. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification.
8. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
9. But, as it is written,

> 'What no eye has seen, nor ear
> heard
> nor the heart of man conceived,
> what God has prepared for those
> who love him,'

10. God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.
11. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.
12. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.
13. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.
14. The natural man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
15. The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.
16. "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.[14]

Did Polisadov 'coincidentally' quote from this particular chapter out of preoccupation or cunning? Either way, *1 Corinthians* not

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[14] *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, revised standard edition. (New York; Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 1381-1382. The Oxford Bible employs the term "unspiritual" in 1 Corinthians 2,14, but adds in *note e*: "or natural." I have elected to use the latter term., p. 1382.

only contains Polisadov's defense but also further elucidates the Archpriest's understanding of the world, the W/word, and its purpose.

Wherein consisted Polisadov's verbal transgression? In the world of the church, "the confessor's secret" is but a truism, while in the world of men, it offends and excludes. *1 Corinthians* suggests that this is only logical; speaking in the world, a man of God is practically guaranteed to offend: "I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom . . . my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Read with *1 Corinthians*, we realize that Polisadov's world is split in two, the division indicated by a linguistic barrier. The obvious truth of spiritual statements is necessarily misunderstood in the world, for the wisdom of God is "a secret and hidden" and "None of the rulers of this age understood this." And what is Shuvalov but a ruler of this age?

But he is a ruler of the age who might judge Polisadov, in an explicit inversion of the Pauline dictum: "The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one." In a world where a spiritual man must answer not only to God but also "to military men," is that world not topsy-turvy? Does that world not place the spiritual man in a rather uncomfortable position vis-à-vis God? Of course, considering Polisadov's seasoning of the humble apologia with a little "Your Excellency" here, and a little "Your Highness" there, one could frown at the implicit reference to a Pauline distaste of "lofty words or wisdom," especially as Polisadov was not appointed as Archpriest of the Peter-Paul Fortress without possession of the requisite talents in the socio-political realm. Nonetheless, I would suggest that Polisadov constantly negotiated between his commitments to God and the world - - and that we find evidence thereof also in this very letter.

Why, in a letter concerning the state of Karakozov's soul, does Polisadov's own psychological state obscure everything else? Why does he presume that details of his own condition amplify the sincerity of Karakozov's confession? ("After hearing his detailed and most seriously conducted confession, in *my* soul slumbered a weight . . . ") Why confess the turmoil of his own soul to Shuvalov, a man he obviously does not know well? ("a thought that consistently pursued me . . . ") The tension with which the letter is wrought cannot only be explained by Polisadov's nervous compensation for his social *faux pas*. Rather, the Archpriest had

indeed been pursued by doubts of his own capacity, challenged by both the conditions in which he was supposed to perform his "difficult service" and Karakozov himself. Beyond the dialogue with Shuvalov, Polisadov as a servant of the state dialogues (glances over his shoulder, as Bakhtin would say) with Polisadov as a servant of God, and convinces himself (and God?) that, given the circumstances, he performed his service as best he could

What were the conditions of his service? Polisadov had been allowed to visit the criminal, even, "what had never before been permitted," to speak with him privately. *But* he "did not have the possibility to properly converse with the criminal about the ulcers of his soul." This seems to indicate that Polisadov's April 23 request to enter into discussions about science, art, literature, and society had been denied, and that the "ulcers of his soul" refer to the painful results of "the ruinous theory . . . which [Karakozov], of course, has not yet repudiated." (For the relation between the intake of ideas and digestion - - and indigestion - - of the soul, note also Polisadov's May 2 letter: "Presently being afraid of the surfeit of spiritual-intellectual food for the person - generally weak in faith and teaching - given to my spiritual care, I would consider it useful to give him time, so to say to digest everything he has been told . . .")[15] But instead of dialogues about the world, Polisadov writes, "[he] had the possibility to preach the New Testament with respect to his condition."

This is where we return to *1 Corinthians* and the linguistic split of the world. Not as a "ruler of the age", but as "a natural man," Karakozov was certainly deaf to the Word and the Spirit of God ("generally weak in faith and teaching"). But when Polisadov, as a man of God, speaks through the Spirit (that is the Word that is the wisdom of God), how can he expect Karakozov, as a man of the world, to hear, seeing as he cannot "receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned"? Hence we note Polisadov's explicit goal in preaching to Karakozov:

> [All of the visits] were filled conducting a divine service, in accordance with the official regulations of

[15] Polisadov's May 2 report to Sorokin, GARFf. 109, op. 1, d. 100 ch.1, ll. 41ob-42. It is interesting that he employs a medical term here rather than, say, a "possession" of the soul.

> the church, a sermon, and a private interview. The goal of all these activities was: To open the Christian consciousness and feeling in the criminal, to whom were applicable the words of the Apocalypse: So then because you are neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth (3, 16); further, to restore him to living hope for God's mercy and to make tangible a state of a true repentance; finally, to prepare him for a candid and open acknowledgement of his guilt in all its breadth.[16]

It is at the end of this letter that Polisadov expresses his concern about the "surfeit of spiritual-intellectual food" and recommends an interlude, "so that he, in the words of the prophet, will become aware of the smoothness of listening to the words of God, prayers, and discussions sobering for the mind." But after months of preaching and talking at Karakozov, the soul of the Archpriest was still weighed down by the resistance he sensed in Karakozov's "distinctive will."[17] Will he submit? Will he repent? Is he sincere? Has he changed his mind?

In the wake of Karakozov's attempted assassination of Alexander II, Dostoevsky expressed his concerns about censorship in a letter to the publicist Mikhail Katkov:

> But how can one fight nihilism without freedom of speech? If even they, the nihilists, were given freedom of speech, that might even be more advantageous then: they would make all of Russia laugh with the *positive* explanations of their teachings. But now people attribute to them the form of sphinxes, enigmas, wisdom, an air of mystery, and that entices the inexperienced.[18]

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[16] May 2 report to Sorokin, GARFf. 109, op. 1, d. 100 ch.1, ll. 41ob-42.

[17] The phrasing is "*svoeobraznaia volia*". *Svoeobraznaia* (adj.) means original, peculiar, distinctive. *Obraznyi* (adj.) means picturesque, graphic, or (liter.) employing images, figurative. *Obraz* is a shape, form, or appearance (but also an icon).

[18] Letter Dostoevsky to Katkov, GARFf. 109, op.1, d. 2051.. N.B.: the Third Section intercepted this letter and then extracted and copied the above-cited section for its records. The full letter appears in F. M. Dostoevsky, *Complete Letters. Volume Two: 1860-1867*, trans. David A. Lowe (Ann Arbor, 1989), p. 194.

Might Polisadov (implicitly) have shared these rather "liberal" sentiments of his fellow "Christian and conservative"? The Archpriest explicitly wrote that, "all these discussions (that is, about science, literature, art, and society) will have the goal of changing the mind of the criminal and the ruinous theories . . ." Did he think that through a dialogical confrontation Karakozov would have seen the internal contradictions of his ideas unraveled? Would a dialogical transcendence have been evidence enough that Karakozov would "fulfill the terms of a Christian confession"? Perhaps then Polisadov might not have hesitated to speak for himself, might not have granted Paul the authoritative word on the riddle of Karakozov's soul.

Ottoman State Formation: Eugene Rogan's Frontiers of State in the Late Ottoman Empire, Trans-Jordan, 1850-1921

Kent Schull

During the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire experienced immense internal and external pressure. This pressure included European economic and imperial encroachment; a need to modernize its system of governance, taxation, military, infrastructure, and education; independence movements of territories within its borders; bankruptcy; and civil upheaval. Similar to its European rivals, the Ottoman Empire attempted to transform itself into a 'modern' nation state through comprehensive reforms such as the Tanzimat and the 1858 Land Code. It is the process of state-formation in the Ottoman Empire, of territorial integration and acculturation, and the extension of market relations and 'modern' instrumentalities of governance , that is the subject of this discussion.

In *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*, Eugene Rogan documents the Ottoman Empire's program of extending market relations and establishing 'modern' instrumentalities of governance in Transjordan.[1] This process of peripheral incorporation in order for the state to extend its authority and tax base undermined the previously existing social order, and sparked resistance by various sections of the population. Rogan's model of analysis and approach is similar to Eugen Weber's in *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*, and Charles Tilly's model in *The Contentious*

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[1] Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*. [Cambridge Middle East Studies] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

French and "Reflections on the History of European State-making."[2] Although Rogan only cites Tilly's article in his bibliography, it appears that Weber and Tilly exert a much greater influence on Rogan's process of analysis than he formally acknowledges. Based upon Tilly and Weber's model of state formation and nation building in Europe, Rogan demonstrates that a similar process occurred within the Ottoman Empire.

Eugen Weber's influential book was the first to comprehensively discuss the process of how a state, in this case France, attempted to acculturate and incorporate its entire population into a modern nation state. He argues that the peasants did not wake up one morning able to speak, read, and write French, as well as to identify themselves as French citizens. These peoples were from extremely varied areas, backgrounds, languages, economic means, and attitudes towards the role of government. The process of incorporating the rural periphery was anything but smooth, quick, or comprehensive. By 1870 very few regions outside the urban centers thought of themselves as French. State formation was a gradual process that Weber argues is "akin to colonization" and "a form of conquest."[3]

Many worked in unison for this process of state building and incorporation to be successful. Entire mindsets and ways of life were altered in order for rural populations to identify themselves as individual citizens of a nation state. Transforming varied and diverse peoples into a unified nation.required much more than simply learning a few patriotic songs and rudimentary French phrases in a school, which met haphazardly during the winter months. Weber meticulously details this complicated process of turning peasants into Frenchman. He argues that this process of fundamental change mainly occurred during the Third Republic, and on at least three fronts. The first front consisted of improvements to the roads and railroads that made up the transportation infrastructure. These improvements greatly increased market, bureaucratic, and cultural contacts between urban and rural areas. The second front was the educational , which spread French ideals, patriotism, and language to hitherto

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[2] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*, (Stanford CA, 1976); Charles Tilly, *The Contentions French* (Cambridge MA, 1986), pp. 390-98. and C. Tilly, "On the History of European State-Making," in C. Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton NJ, 1975.

[3] Weber. *Peasants into Frenchmen*, p. 486.

indifferent regions. The third front of military service was combined with education, and improved literacy and French language acquisition, but also provided a quality of life unattainable in villages or rural areas. These three factors brought the urban and rural areas into intimate contact with each other. Manufactured products replaced local items; technologies improved agricultural production; new markets allowed this surplus to be sold at better prices allowing for more leisure time and a consolidation of land. More leisure time enabled better education and a desire to enter the state bureaucracy on local and national levels. Consolidation of land meant a larger available labor force and immigration to urban areas. Through these changes, the state extended its authority more easily into these newly accessible and productive areas. Modernity took an unshakable hold in France. Weber is very careful to point out that this process was not complete, systematic, or comprehensive, but happened in different regions at different times under different circumstances.[4]

Charles Tilly, in *The Contentious French* and in his article "On the History of European State-Making" demonstrates the connection between the rise of the nation state and the expansion of capitalism in France and Western Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[5] This process had two phases. First, the expansion of capitalism opened more sources of revenue that state-makers could seize for national purposes. Second, urbanization and increased industry created a higher demand for agricultural products, which encouraged landlords to create a readymade labor force out of landless peasants. As the government bureaucracy grew, the need for revenues increased, which drew the peripheral areas more into governmental focus as sources of taxation and resource acquisition. The most important element that facilitated state building was the control of coercive power and extraction of resources through a standing army. The creation of a standing army formed a causational chain that increased the state's capabilities to extract resources from the subject population. This, in turn, caused the development of new bureaucratic and administrative systems, and sparked resistance from the subject population. This, in turn, caused the state to exercise its coercive powers in order to suppress the rebellions and

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[4] Weber. *Peasants into Frenchmen*, pp. 493-94.
[5] Tilly. "On the History of European State-Making," pp. 72-3.

thus increase the amount of resource extraction. Another important aspect for state building was the establishment of a national homogenous identity or ethos, which was created through increasing the level of political participation of the populace and increasing the distribution and redistribution of wealth, land, and power.[6]

This process of state incorporation, extension of 'modern' instrumentalities of governance, and capitalist expansion did not go uncontested. Tilly outlines the evolution of resistance in France in three stages. The first stage consists of archaic resistance which was spontaneous and sporadic, such as bread riots. The second form of resistance was defensive in posture and organization, and sought to preserve existing rights and maintain the status quo, but not overthrow the government, or change it from within. The final form of resistance is pro-active. It is highly organized and the process is gradual in attempting to replace the system of government from within the political structure. Its basic premise is that its ideology and programs are better than the current regime.[7]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was in desperate straits and needed serious reform, modernization, and centralization if it was going to survive and compete economically and militarily with its neighbors. The state attempted to extend its power base, centralize its authority, and increase its tax extractive capabilities. Transjordan was one of those peripheral regions in the Ottoman Empire that was targeted for incorporation and centralization. It had traditionally been ignored, but had great economic potential. Large amounts of arable land lay fallow due to tribal ownership and pastoral use. It is apparent in Rogan's book that the Ottoman Empire's program of reform in Transjordan included the same processes that were implemented by Western European states, but with a few important modifications. The Western European countries did not have to sedentize their populations. They also primarily used schools to educate and acculturate their populations. However, the Ottoman Empire had to sedentize and resettle groups in order to colonize its land, and it utilized missionaries to educate and acculturate their peripheral populations in Transjordan. Also, only the first two steps of Tilly's evolution of resistance apply in Transjordan. Besides these differences, the process of internal colonization in

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[6] Tilly, "On the History of European State-Making," pp. 79-80.
[7] Weber, *The Contentions French*, pp. 390-98.

the Ottoman Empire was very similar to Western Europe. It included infrastructure improvements in communication, transportation, civil order (including courts, bureaucracy, and a standardized law code), control over coercive force and security, improvements in agricultural production, expansion of education, land reform, and the extension of market relations.

Rogan also demonstrates that this process of state formation in Transjordan is similar to Weber and Tilly's models in that it was neither systematic nor comprehensive, but proceeded in fits and starts. As in France and the rest of Western Europe, Ottoman reforms resulted in a social revolution that shifted loyalties, changed 'traditional' power structures, and commoditized land and labor. This process also did not go uncontested by the colonized populations.

The 1867 civil administration law called for the Ottoman Empire to extend its civil, military, and bureaucratic presence into frontier/peripheral areas in order to centralize power, increase tax collection, and create a modern nation state. This program was instituted in Transjordan, beginning in the northern districts of 'Ajlun and Balqa' and later spreading to the southern regions of Karak and Ma'an. At first, these areas were subjugated militarily, and later the infrastructure was improved through advances in communication and transportation such as road, railway, and telegraph line construction. These improvements provided the new administrative and military personal quicker and more effective access to resources and the central government, which, in turn, resulted in better security in these regions as troops could be transported more rapidly and communicate more easily and effectively. Other basic infrastructure needed to be built in the regions of Transjordan, such as basic governmental buildings and residences. The new administrative apparatus also included a judge and the beginnings of a unified legal code. Once the state had a permanent presence and the ability to ensure security in these regions, then other reforms could be enacted and enforced, such as land redistribution and settlement. This would enable the state to tap into Transjordan's major resource- agriculture.[8]

At the same time as the Ottoman state sought to improve the infrastructure and government administration, it also attempted to make Transjordan more agriculturally productive. Being mainly a tribal area made up of pastoral nomads, Transjordan's agricultural

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[8] Rogan, *Frontiers*, pp. 44-69.

potential was not being realized. As the Ottoman administration gained a greater presence in the region, it increased its efforts to reform land ownership and improve agricultural productivity through the implementation of the 1858 Land Law, the denomadization of the Bedouins, and the colonization and settlement of Chechen, Turkman, and Circassian immigrants. These measures increased the amount of arable land under production, and created urban populations for these new administrations to govern. The success of these programs in the various regions of Transjordan depended upon state control over coercive force. The farther away areas were from administrative centers, the less able the Ottomans were to colonize and settle the areas, and subjugate the native populations.[9]

The registration and colonization of land, the settlement of new populations, and the denomadization of Bedouins had a major impact on the socio-economic and political make-up of the Transjordanian regions. However, the influx of merchants and the introduction of a market economy had a greater effect in altering social, cultural, economic, and political affiliations, loyalties, and superstructure. As urban areas grew, infrastructure improved, agricultural production increased, and security remained steady or improved, merchants from surrounding regions moved into Transjordan. These merchants brought regional and world markets closer to Transjordan, exploited market opportunities, monetized the economy, and loaned money. They caused social stratification by becoming the new elite through investment in land and agriculture and working with, or becoming, the state's administrative arm.[10]

Christian missionaries preformed the state's role of educator and supplier of social programs, such as hospitals and welfare services, prior to Ottoman attempts to create a state. It was this group that brought modern education and Western European subjects into schools and began literacy programs. The Ottoman state saw this as beneficial, but only up to a certain point, and under Abdel Hamid II, the state restricted the Western European Missionaries and sent in their own missionaries. This Ottoman program helped to acculturate the Transjordanian population to a unified religious belief and accentuate the Ottoman Empire's Muslim character. Christian missionaries, and then later the

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[9] Rogan, *Frontiers*, pp.70-94.
[10] Rogan, *Frontiers*, pp. 95-121.

Ottomans, built schools, clinics, churches and mosques.. This was the Ottoman's attempt to create a national Osmanli ethos in Transjordan.[11]

All of these processes, the extension of state rule, communication and transportation infrastructures, , bureaucratic changes, control of coercive force, extension of market relations, sedenization of the Bedouin, internal colonization and settlement, missionary activity, land .reform, and increased agricultural productivity, revolutionized the social structure of Transjordan and incorporated it into the larger Empire. It created towns and urbanized areas, altered longstanding loyalties, centralized state power, changed local elite structures, commoditized labor and land, and stratified society through the monetization of the economy. It brought hitherto isolated areas in contact with the outside world, facilitated travel and immigration, improved health and education, but also changed fundamental social structures. These changes did not go unchallenged, especially when it came to the possibility of military conscription. Resistance to change was especially prevalent in areas where the state could not fully exert itself, as illustrated by the Karak Revolt of 1910.[12]

This revolt serves as a reminder of the process of state building that both Weber and Tilly discuss in their works. It is a gradual process, and the state must be careful not to overextend itself. There were very few settlers or merchants in the regions farther from the Ottoman centers of power in Damascus, so there was no one to play the mediator between the state and local populations until the state could assume full control. When the Ottoman officials attempted to force disarmament of the Bedouins and undertake military registry and conscription in the district of Karak, it was met with great resistance, because the state did not have a 'legitimate' presence in this area. This revolt also signifies the form of defensive resistance, as outlined by Tilly. This was not a revolt to overthrow the Ottomans, but an attempt to maintain the status quo. It was much more organized then previous attempts by Bedouins, who randomly attacked merchant caravans, or by peasants, who hid their sons and lied about their ages in order to avoid military conscription.[13] The whole process of state and nation building, as outlined above, needs to be implemented in order for effective state building and acculturation to take place.

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[11] Rogan, *Frontiers*, pp. 122-59.
[12] Rogan, *Frontiers*, pp. 160-83.
[13] Rogan, *Frontiers*, pp. 184-217.

This is equally true in France and Western Europe as it was in the Ottoman Empire.

If one conclusion can be drawn from this exercise, it is that state building did effectively take place in the Ottoman Empire, thus changing its image as the "Sick Man of Europe" to one of a viable nation successfully creating itself into a 'modern' state. At roughly the same period that state centralization and nation building were underway in Western Europe, it was also occurring in the Ottoman Empire. Some areas, like the Balkan regions, broke away or were 'liberated' from Ottoman rule, but other areas were being incorporated into a centralized Ottoman state, as in the case of Transjordan. The Tanzimat reforms were not simply an ineffective, final effort to try to save the empire. We will never know, but it is fruitful to speculate, what the Ottoman Empire would have been had it never involved itself in World War I. Arab and Turkish Nationalism may have never developed to the extent it did, and the Ottoman Empire could by now be a centralized nation state, like any other Western European country.

This exercise in comparative state building also allows us finally to dispel some of the myths associated with the Treaty of Versailles. We are able to undermine the ideological position of France and Britain, that they castingoff the oppressive and despotic rule of a decrepit empire in order to foster self-rule, . It is evident that, prior to World War I, the Ottoman Empire was forming a modern nation state within its borders, centralizing power, changing social structures, and introducing a market economy. It was doing all the things that a 'modern' European nation state was doing and doing them successfully.

The foundation myths of modern Arab Nationalism are also placed in further jeopardy by Rogan's work. The Ottomans were not despotic oppressive rulers who only exploited their empire. The basic infrastructure, which many of the nation states in the Middle East possess today, was created by the Ottomans during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In order to understand the cultural, social, political, and economic systems of these states it is important to go beyond the Mandate periods and analyze what the Ottomans had created before their empire was dismembered after World War I. It was the Ottomans who introduced market economies and instrumentalities of governance into these regions, and not the British or French. This is especially the case in Transjordan.

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Book Reviews

Matthew S. Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Military of Samarra, 200-275 AH/815-889 CE.* [Suny Series in Medieval Middle East History] Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2001. xx + 303pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliographical references. $79.50 (Hard). ISBN: 0791447952

In *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords*, Matthew S. Gordon provides a badly needed social and political history of the Turkish soldiers bought, trained, and utilized by the `Abbasid Caliphs al-Ma'mun and al-Mu`tasim. Combing through all of the available source material, which includes traditional sources such as al-Tabari, al-Mas`udi, al-Ya`qubi, and al-Jahiz plus the ingenious use of archeological reports and numismatics, Gordon provides a detailed interpretation of the caliphate's transfer of its capital from Baghdad to Samarra and the subsequent rise of these Turkish military slaves to political and military power over the `Abbasid Empire.

The main thrust of Gordon's argument concerns the composition and characteristics of these Turkish soldiers. He argues that the Turkish soldiers were military slaves originally purchased or captured in Central Asia. In fact, Gordon argues that there were two main types of Turks in this elite `Abbasid military institution, Baghdadi and 'steppe' Turks. The Baghdadi Turks were the leaders of this military institution who had been assimilated and indoctrinated to Islamic norms while living in Baghdad over a number of years. In contrast to the Baghdadi Turks, the 'steppe' Turks were recent imports captured or purchased from Central Asia and who were only nominally Islamicized. By calling these Turks 'slave soldiers' Gordon is arguing that they were *mamalik*. According to Gordon, these Turks were the beginning of the powerful and influential Islamic Mamluk military institution.

Gordon's argument concerning the Mamluk institution is very problematic because it is unclear whether or not these Turks were actually slaves, plus the term used to refer to them in the sources is never *mamluk* but *muwali*. The use of the term *muwali* implies that they were free Muslims and not the pagan military slaves that

Gordon argues. In addition to this the Turkish soldiers, and their children, were given salaries in exchange for their services and held high positions of political power. What would have been much more useful to Gordon's argument would have been a detailed analysis of slavery and slave status. Also Gordon would have benefited from a more detailed discussion of what a *muwali* was according to his sources and then compare the Turks with other non-Arab groups designated as *muwali*.

Also, Gordon's use of the term 'Islamic tradition' in reference to how the Turks were only nominally Islamicized is very problematic. Gordon falls into the trap of so many other scholars of this period by treating Islam as if it were a solidified dogmatic tradition in the ninth century. He never defines what the Islamic tradition is, nor does he give any sense to what it means to be nominally converted or truly converted to Islam in this period. According to W. Montgomery Watt's *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, a normative Islam was still being developed at this very time and would not concretize for almost another century. In fact the very title of this book *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords* and his claim that this was a pagan tradition brought to Samarra by the Turks reveals Gordon's problematic conception of paganism and Islam.

Although Gordon is to be commended on his broad use of sources, both primary and secondary, his lack of critique of al-Tabari, or any other sources he utilizes, is disturbing. For the most part, he simply culls all of the available facts and information from these sources, sifting out erroneous or obviously fabricated accounts and assembles them together in a very dry narrative. He never discusses who these scholars were or their historical, social, political, or cultural background and context. He treats them as mere conveyors of facts and not as intellectuals with their own axes to grind, tacit assumptions, and prejudices. Even a simple discussion concerning how the Turks were treated as an 'other' in the sources would have been beneficial.

On a different but related point, how can Gordon write a political and social history of the Turkish military guard in Samarra and not discuss its relationship to the *mihna* and other political and religious developments that raged during the reigns of al-Ma'mun and al-Mu'tasim? Gordon appears to be so narrowly focused on only what the sources have to say about Turks that he forgets to place the Turks and the establishment of Samarra with its broader socio-economic, political, and cultural context. This

broader context of economic decline, civil war, religious solidification, purging, and general upheaval would truly enrich and deepen his argument concerning the Turks' rise to power politically and militarily.

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William Beik. *Louis XIV and Absolutism: A Brief Study with Documents.* Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 247 pp. $10.50 (paper). ISBN: 031213309X

The name of Louis XIV (1638-1715) is traditionally linked to the concept of absolutism. It is precisely this stereotype that William Beik attempts to decipher in his book, *Louis XIV and Absolutism: A Brief Study with Documents*. Beik's book is another excellent volume in the highly acclaimed Bedford Series in History and Culture, and as such, it is primarily intended for the student. This document-based text, however, is very useful for every scholar of this period and for any person who is interested in this subject. This collection of documents with commentary explores the meaning of absolute monarchy by examining how Louis XIV became one of Europe's most famous and successful rulers.

Within traditional historiography has Louis XIV is viewed as an all-powerful and absolute monarch, who triumphantly neutralized the greatest obstacle to absolutism, the nobility, at his grand court in Versailles. Recent historiography, however, has been inclined towards the redefinition of absolutism. These studies have challenged this older narrative by arguing that the king worked in conjunction with various groups in a corporative society in order to secure the proper functioning of his government. A central premise of this revisionist scholarship on absolutism is that the centralizing monarchy and the traditional nobility shared interests and sought mutual understanding. Louis XIV's need to negotiate with other groups, institutions, and factions in French society has been stressed by revisionist historians, such as Roger Mettam, William Beik, and Pierre Goubert. Overall, scholars have succeeded in revising the established image of French absolutism, by concluding that the French monarchy in the seventeenth century did not achieve truly absolute power. Although Louis XIV built a very

centralized state, he was not entirely absolute because he faced several practical limitations on his power.

Beik's book is very much a part of this recent trend of studies. In the introduction, he discusses the theoretical and practical nature of absolutism and its implications for the development of the French state and society. He explains how in theory the king had unlimited and uncontested power, yet in practice was constrained in several important ways. By doing this, Beik strives to show that Louis' absolute monarchy was not all at "like the all-powerful reign that is sometimes imagined" (vii). The source readings are therefore meant to help students "understand absolutism as a process of interaction between the king and powerful social groups in a society that was organized around diverse ranks, each with special privileges" (viii). Although Beik encourages students to decide for themselves how absolutist Louis XIV's reign really was, he argues that central to the understanding of absolutism is the reality that Louis XIV ruled through compromise with others. Beik suggests that "absolutism can be defined as the king's authority interacting with all these diverse and privileged entities" (97).

The selection of documents is oriented to help the reader understand absolutism in practice and the organization of early modern French society by showing the perspectives of many people, not just those of the king and his ministers. Some of the issues covered by the various documents are the problem of the *Fronde* (the civil war fought between 1648 and 1653), Jean-Baptiste Colbert's (Louis XIV's finance minister) grasp of the economic and fiscal dimensions of the kingdom, the taming of the rural nobility, the interaction of royal ministers and provincial authorities, the repression of Jansenists and Protestants (French Calvinists were known as Huguenots), popular rebellions, and royal image-making.

Unfortunately, Beik does not cover the full period of Louis XIV's rule, nor does he examine the king's foreign policy and warmongering, which are central aspects of his reign and which had a tremendous impact on France and Europe. Warfare was a pivotal part of Louis XIV's policies because wars and military expenditure constituted the largest cost on the government's budget, even more so than his use of funds for the court, architectural projects, and other such luxuries. Louis' belligerent foreign policy was fundamental in his goal of expanding France's borders. These wars drained the resources of the French state, causing severe strains by the end of his rule. Beik, however, did

not see this as a necessary inclusion because as he points out, the book focuses on domestic affairs during the first thirty years of Louis XIV's personal rule "because that is where we can best analyze the workings of the system" (219). On the whole, however, William Beik's *Louis XIV and Absolutism* is a well-written, informative, and highly recommendable book, with an outstanding selection of documents.

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Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra. *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001. xviii + 450 pp. $60.00 (Hard) ISBN: 0804740844

In his fascinating work, the Ecuadorian scholar Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra returns our attention to a well-known but little-debated curiosity in colonial Latin American historiography. In 1768, steeped in the logic of one current of Enlightenment thought, the Dutch cleric Cornelius DePauw declared that the American continent and all who lived on it were fundamentally weak, "effeminate," backward, and incapable of advanced civilization. Even those Europeans who migrated to America were doomed to watch their descendants gradually degenerate to the squalid level of existence of America's indigenous population. Other European historians followed DePauw, rewriting the history of the New World to reflect these new "scientific" insights; one consequence of the "degeneracy theory" was a new set of epistemological criteria for writing history – one that automatically discredited historiography from previous centuries that, in the new intellectual climate of the Enlightenment, suddenly seemed quaint and absurd. However, this step towards modernity also stripped the inhabitants of America (even those of European heritage) of control over what they thought of as their own history – being "American," they were deemed incapable of contributing valid insights to the discourse. Instead, insisted the new paradigm, only "philosophical travelers" and their enlightened brethren in northern Europe had the intellectual faculties and sober, dispassionate disinterest required to truly grasp the mysteries of the American continent. Inevitably,

many "patriots" angrily responded (including, notably, Thomas Jefferson), seeking to strike down the notion of American degeneracy and retake control of their history.

Thus was born the "polemic" that Antonello Gerbi chronicled in his classic 1955 tome, *The Dispute of the New World.*[1] According to Gerbi, the polemic lasted for several decades, until the new scientific paradigm articulated by Romantic-era thinkers such as von Humboldt and Hegel altered the fundamental terms of the debate. In later European discourse, then, inhabitants of America were no longer "degenerate" – instead, they became "orientalized:" humans with the full potential for civilization but captive to a stifling despotism that muted freedom and creativity. Thus, with the appearance in the early nineteenth century of this new conceptualization of America, Gerbi's story ends.

Fast-forward two centuries to Cañizares-Esguerra's lucid and original study, *How to Write the History of the New World,* in which the author both builds upon and challenges Gerbi's findings, eventually questioning whether or not the academy has truly purged itself of the chauvinism that marked eighteenth-century studies of America (at least its Latin half). Focusing on Gerbi's eighteenth-century polemic, but from different angles, Cañizares-Esguerra demonstrates that, while Gerbi was certainly unsympathetic to the prejudices of the degeneracy theory, he inadvertently "reproduced many in his own writings." (347) He does this mainly by either ignoring much of the eighteenth-century scholarship coming out of Spain and Spanish America, or else denying the originality of its insights, dismissing it as "belligerent, angry, and resentful," but void of "any organic corpus of argument and factual data" opposing the degeneracy theory.[2] As a result, his history unfortunately echoes the conceit of the degeneracy theorists by failing to recognize the scientific and epistemological novelty achieved by some Spanish American intellectuals, thereby perpetuating the notion of Latin American backwardness and incapacity for homegrown modernity.

One of Cañizares-Esguerra's central theses, then, is that the Enlightenment did not skip over Spain and Spanish America – it simply took different forms there. The prevailing notion of Enlightenment in today's North American and European universities, like Gerbi's, is far too narrow, a falsely universalized

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[1] Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750 - 1900*, Jeremy Moyle, trans. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973).
[2] Gerbi, *Dispute*, p. 289

concept that necessarily limits the definition of genuine Enlightenment to a small number of northern Europeans, blinding us to the very creative manifestations of modernity in the "peripheries" of intellectual history like Mexico and Spain. The result is a losing situation for Spanish American intellectuals: those who uncritically accept European modernism are seen as unoriginal and derivative, whereas those who articulated alternative epistemologies are interpreted as backwards reactionaries stubbornly resisting progress.

However, the traditional notion that the Enlightenment spawned from the pens of a handful of great thinkers in northern Europe engaging in creative and detached philosophical contemplation has been challenged in recent scholarship, which decentralizes its genesis and diffuses it into a less elite and esoteric public sphere – a realm of particular, mundane, and (most importantly) *local* political and social concerns. If this is true, then anywhere there are debates and controversies (that is, everywhere), new languages of epistemological legitimation are bound to arise – meaning that we might speak of various autochthonous "*enlightenments*" rather than *"the Enlightenment"* – and not be surprised when the intellectual and political concerns of Spanish Americans inevitably differ from those of northern European elites. In this sense, then, to fault the Mexican responses to DePauw, as Gerbi does, for not adhering to the same epistemological principles as conceived in Paris, Edinburgh, and Berlin, is akin to chastising a Brazilian for not speaking Chinese.

Accordingly, Canizares-Esguerra's work supplements Gerbi's chronicle with a well-researched exposition of some of the many important-yet-forgotten academic debates in both Spain and its colonies from the eighteenth century that, according to the author, share in the fundamental principles of modernity, such as skepticism and empiricism, yet have not been considered as such because of how they differ superficially and thematically from contemporaneous debates in northern Europe. His discussion of the intellectual climate of eighteenth-century Spanish America is broad and diverse, touching upon Creole "indigenists" such as Juan José de Eguiara y Eguren, Jesuit historians-in-exile such as Francisco Xavier Clavigero, and Mexican patriots such as Fray Servando Teresa de Mier, all of whom, in one way or another, offered modern ("enlightened") opposition to the degeneracy theory of the European conjectural historians (though some even preceded the "polemic," further highlighting their autonomous

epistemological creativity). Most importantly, the author identifies a commonality informing the works of these thinkers: a new set of criteria for writing legitimate history that returned control of the historiography of the New World to its inhabitants. This he names "the discourse of patriotic epistemology," which, in its essence, denied that anyone without long-term experience in America could truly understand it. Cañizares-Esguerra's brilliant deconstruction of "patriotic epistemology" demonstrates that, far from being a baroque or derivative enterprise, it belongs to modernity every bit as much as the Eurocentric discourse it opposed – indeed, he argues, its insistence on the importance of immediate experience within a culture for the historian and ethnographer "foreshadowed many of our contemporary postcolonial insights." (206)

How to Write the History of the New World opens many doors for future scholarship. In terms of Latin American intellectual history, Cañizares-Esguerra's model that locates original epistemological and philosophical insight in terms of purely Latin American concerns – as in, for example, the debates over the solar stone in Mexico City or the ruins at Palenque in Guatemala – can be a means for historians to glean information that does not depend on theories steeped in the provincial experience of Europe. Comparisons can be useful, but all too often they implicitly but misleadingly follow the model of a scientific experiment, in which the test specimen is measured against the "normative" (read: European) case. These insights are being applied and refined successfully in ethnography and cultural history; however, Latin American intellectual history lags far behind. Cañizares-Esguerra hints this is perhaps due to the "narrative conceit" in today's academy – the stubborn remnants of Gerbi's polemic – that demands that students interpret Latin American history as a "non-Western" experience, unworthy of intellectual historians, and "where only stories of strife and exploitation are worth chronicling." (10) Inasmuch as the polemic survives, Cañizares-Esguerra (quite self-consciously, if not explicitly) frames himself as the heir to the discourse of patriotic epistemology, continuing in the tradition of defending the intellectual contributions of Latin American civilization against what he perceives as a narrow and limited north Atlantic conception of progress and modernity. He explains, "as long as students in the United States are only offered stories of violence, resistance to exploitation, instability, and corruption in Latin America..., there are going to be storytellers like myself to recreate alternative worlds." (348) To follow

Cañizares-Esguerra's vision is to approach Latin American intellectual history on its own terms, rejecting conceptual and thematic categories forged in provincial European experience, and aiming to recognize true intellectual creativity wherever it may have lain hidden – long overlooked by historians seeking Parisian salons in American forests.

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Esteban Buch. *Beethoven's Ninth: A Political History*. Translated by Richard Miller. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2003. 327 pp. $27.50 (Hard). ISBN: 0226078124

Ludwig van Beethoven's (1770-1827) Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 is one of the most powerful symbols of Western classical music. The Ninth Symphony's status as an icon of Western classical music is unquestionable, but since its premiere in Vienna on 7 May 1824, it has been subject to many complex and contradictory uses and abuses. While it is viewed by many as a symbol of universal brotherhood and freedom, it has also been used by nationalists to enforce their nation's supremacy and power. French republicans, German nationalists, and many others have, in the course of its history, embraced the piece. It was performed at a concert to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was used as Rhodesia's national anthem, Hitler celebrated his birthdays with it, it was embraced by the French who equated it with the ideals of the French Revolution, it is played at the Olympic games and other sporting events, and it is the official anthem of the European Union. How can it be both nationalist and universalist? How is it possible for a single piece of music to generate such divergent interpretations and appropriations?

These issues are central to Esteban Buch's book, originally published in 1999 as *La Neuvième de Beethoven: Une histoire politique* and made available to the English-speaking world through Richard Miller's excellent translation. Buch traces the political and cultural history of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony since its premiere nearly two centuries ago. The book is divided into two parts, the first of which is dedicated to "The Birth of Modern Political Music." These first five chapters set the stage for

the posthumous reception of Beethoven and the Ninth. Buch starts by situating the Ninth Symphony and other Beethoven compositions, such as *Der glorreiche Augenblick* (*The Glorious Moment*), Op. 136 (1814), among the tradition of European political music, of which *God Save the King* and *La Marseillaise* are prime examples. He then explains how Beethoven reacted to the 1814 Congress of Vienna and how the experience of being a composer of official state music for this event influenced him when composing the Ninth Symphony.

The second part of the book deals with the "Political Reception of the *Ode to Joy*" and discusses the reception and different appropriations of Beethoven and Symphony No. 9. This section essentially begins on 26 March 1827, the day Beethoven died. This day marked the beginning of what would become the Beethoven myth. In the remaining seven chapters of the book, Buch discusses the many ways in which the Ninth was received and how Beethoven's image became the embodiment of greatness. Dilemmas and contradictions abound at ceremonies meant to honor and celebrate Beethoven's accomplishments – from the 1845 festival at Bonn when Beethoven's statue was unveiled, to the 1927 commemoration of the centenary of the great composer's death. Buch explains how Beethoven and the Ninth were both exposed to all sorts of debates between nationalists and universalists throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Beethoven and his music were capable of expressing European, German, and universal values simultaneously.

One of the shortcomings of the book is that Buch focuses almost entirely on the *Ode to Joy* and its innumerable appropriations, and in doing so, fails to explain the significance of the rest of the symphony. However, Buch makes up for this by providing the reader with a very thorough, convincing, and informative argument about the political uses of the piece and of the growth of Beethoven's posthumous reputation as the musical embodiment of genius. *Beethoven's Ninth* is a very interesting and well-written book, which should be of interest for both historians and musicologists alike. Any reader interested in reception history, classical music, and Beethoven, of course, will enjoy reading this great book.

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James A Secord, *Victorian Sensation: the Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000. xix, 624 p. : ill., maps ; 24 cm. $35.00 (Cloth). ISBN: 0226744108

The anonymous publication of *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* in 1884 caused a "sensation" in the Victorian era. The book chronicled a process of natural development that occurs on cosmological and earthly scales – notably suggesting the transmutation of species. Many readers argued over the consequences, such as humans developing from animals. Printed at a time when the industrial revolution was redefining communication, *Vestiges* provides James Secord with a window, a "cultural tracer", to view the effects of publishing for readers on a wide scale. Because of this, Secord does not posit *Vestiges* as a static artifact, providing fixed ideas about laws of nature which are either picked up or discarded by a certain audience. Rather, Secord answers larger questions about how reading practices differed by locality, gender, and class; how the book was mobilized in political and religious debates; how and why the interpretations of the book differed; and the list goes on. At the heart of *Victorian Sensation* is a historical process of deeply embedding *Vestiges* into a number of systems: social, political, cultural, religious, philosophical, and economic. The scope of *Victorian Sensation* is broad, even though the nominal subject of a single book (14 editions of it, though) is narrow. Secord's book itself has created a sensation of its own, at least within the historical community; it has already garnered the 2002 Pfizer Prize from the History of Science Society. In this tour-de-force, Secord relays a new framework for historical studies.

Victorian Sensation itself is divided into four parts, each focusing on a different aspect of reading in order to demonstrate the "power" of books. The first part focuses on the network of readers, authors, publishers, and printers which all work in concert to produce a literary work. This network is presented against the backdrop of technologies of publishing and distribution, and showcases the appearance and availability of books as integral to their meaning. The second part focuses on a reader's locale – concentrating on different receptions of *Vestiges* in London, Edinburgh, Oxford, Cambridge and Liverpool. There is an emphasis on how the aristocracy as well as the working classes

engage with and employ the anonymous book in social settings, political debates, and religious controversies. The third part switches focus from place to person, examining how reading is related to individual identity, including the identity of the author of *Vestiges*, publishing-giant Robert Chambers. The last part explains how various classes negotiated the future role of the scientific practitioners – untangling to Chambers's contemporaries who were men of science and what was their domain.

As *Vestiges* was considered a literary hybrid – a Frankenstein of its day, combining distinct literary forms – so too is *Victorian Sensation*. Upon embarking on this study, Secord was confronted with choices about narrowly-scoped historical accounts and more global themes. In general, historians with a narrow-scope provide important detail which creates nuances in a thesis; broad histories on the other hand are an attempt to synthesize trends over a large spatial and/or temporal frame, and in the process, "smooth" out these nuances. Secord creates a syncretism of these two scopes, employing a series of narrowly focused chapters as a means to flesh out larger themes.

One prime example of this syncretism is in the story of Thomas Archer Hirst of Halifax. Hirst's detailed journal provided rich fodder for Secord because it explicitly spells out his reading practices, practices that were implicit in other contemporary journals. Still, the chapter is just a history of one man. Secord overcomes this obstacle by doing to Hirst just what he did with *Vestiges*: embed him into larger themes. Hirst acts as a convincing stand-in for people in his station in life: "Hirst's experience show the dramatic expansion of the range of books available to young men in the middle class and the highest reachers of the artisan class" (348). He provides an example of how some people read (carefully and comparatively by juxtaposition with other tests), appropriated their own meaning of texts into dynamic belief systems, and were motivated to read books like *Vestiges* in the first place. These themes recur in other chapters also, but for different classes, locales, and time periods. Complex, nuances themes are then created by networking these individual stories.

This is just one part of a new historical framework that Secord is building throughout *Victorian Sensation*, and explicitly delineated in the Prologue and Epilogue. In his own words Secord's approach "has been an experiment in a different kind of history. It has explored the introduction of an evolutionary account of nature into the public debate in order to see what happens when

a major historical episode is approached from the perspective of reading" (518). To do this, Secord garnered tools from literary critics, cultural historians, and historians of the book. With this toolbox, books appear as open and mutable; their meaning shifts with every reading. Who, what, where, why, how, when, these questions of the reader, the text, and the author all matter to the meaning of a book. Secord studies networks of these relations in the hopes of gaining as complete a contextualization as possible.

The historical framework is not without its drawbacks. Most notably, by focusing on *Vestiges* as pervasive in so many aspects of Victorian life upon publication, the reader is not able to contextualize *Vestiges* in relation to *prior* books. One gets the sense that *Vestiges* was an anomaly in the intellectual environment of the day. We find out where *Vestiges* the book went in publication, but we do not get a sense of where the ideas in *Vestiges* came from. Very little attention is given to the intellectual background of the protagonist in this tale.

Secord does with Darwin's *Origin of Species* exactly what he should have done with *Vestiges*. He proclaims that *Origin* was not the "start" of a new era in restructuring knowledge, but rather the outcome of a long tradition of restructuring knowledge. In one sense, this comparison is useful because it is a revisionist history – repositioning *Origin* in a larger chain of ideas which had concerned men (and women) of science for years. However, just as *Origin* becomes redefined in relations to *Vestiges*, would it not be just as useful to see *Vestiges* in a similar relation?

Justice cannot be done in a review of this book without pointing to the extensive research done to uncover a wealth of material. Secord's heavy reliance on primary sources (primarily letters, journal and newspaper articles, and books) provides the extraordinary detail standing solidly behind his grand claims. Moreover, it would be remiss to neglect the myriad pictures and illustrations that enliven *Victorian Sensation*, bringing a visual dimension to an already textured book.

To this reviewer, however, the most significant of Secord's many contributions to cultural and intellectual history is providing a new way to look at texts. A book like *Vestiges* is no longer merely a physical or intellectual entity. It involves entire networks of people (authors, readers, publishers), machines (printing machines, trains), and institutions (publication houses, libraries, churches, the postal service, journals, newspapers). These networks allow books to have (indirectly) the power to engage in

debates and be employed in controversies. They do this by providing an *experience* for a reader which needs to be situated in relation to other knowledge, ideological beliefs, and self-identity. In this way texts can engender change – cultural and social change. No longer can historians continue to view texts as self-contained, bearing a clear, stable meaning. Instead, texts are in a dialectical relationship with culture a text can effect cultural change, which can then affect how a text is read.

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Jim Weeks, Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. 267 pp. $29.95 (Hard). ISBN: 0691102716.

Thomas A. Desjardin, These Honored Dead: How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory. Cambridge, Mass: Da Capo Press, 2003. 246 pp. $26.00 (Hard). ISBN:0306812673.

In 1865, two years after the Battle of Gettysburg, a Philadelphia reporter named George Gross was dispatched to write a series of follow-up stories on the battle. He long searched for something—anything—fresh to write about, and in the first story published he shared his frustrations with his readers, griping that, "It is difficult to say anything new on a theme already hackneyed." Of course, time would show how wrong Gross was. Gettysburg has become one of the most written about events in American history, the topic of a thousand books, with many more published each year. Two new books on the memory of the battle, by Jim Weeks and Thomas A. Desjardin respectively, make useful contributions to that body of literature.

Weeks' *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine* is largely concerned with Gettysburg as a place, and how that place has been used by Americans over time. He divides the 140 years that have passed since the battle into four parts, each typified by a particular use of the battlefield that he feels reflects larger currents in American society. For example, he argues that Gettysburg served for the first 20 years of its post-Civil War life as a "genteel summer resort." Promoters emphasized both the town's natural

resources—particularly its mineral springs—as well its potential for teaching moral lessons and civic virtues. Weeks suggests that this particular bill of fare was meant to appeal to the genteel values of Victorian America, and thus is a reflection of the emergence of the middle class in the mid- to late-19th century.

Weeks' ideas, based on exhaustive research, are intriguing. It surely would never occur to any modern visitor to Gettysburg that the battlefield once had more in common with Niagara Falls as a tourist destination than it did with Plymouth Rock or Valley Forge. That said, the book often reads as a kind of polemic. The reader is left with the sense that Americans have used the battlefield for one phony purpose after another in the past 140 years, and that the author does not approve of any of it. Weeks' tone is so negative, so snide, that it becomes quite distracting at times and undermines confidence in the dispassion of his analysis.

In contrast to Weeks' focus on Gettysburg the place, Desjardin's *These Honored Dead: How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory* is interested largely in examining the mythology that has surrounded the battle. As he explains, "I came to Gettysburg thinking that I knew a lot about the battle, and like most others I quickly discovered that I knew a lot about what people think they know about the battle—and most of it was wrong." In a book notable for its readability, Desjardin examines and debunks many of the legends of the Battle of Gettysburg that he has encountered, some the product of inadvertent error, others deliberately constructed for one purpose or another.

Typical of Desjardin's approach is his examination of the oft-repeated chestnut that the Union's 20th Maine Infantry Regiment was grossly outnumbered by Confederate troops when the two sides clashed at Little Round Top on the second day of the battle. Tracing this information back to its source, Desjardin shows that it sprung from the two most widely circulated accounts of the assault, both of them erroneous. One was written by the Southern officer who commanded the Confederates' attack, and then—as Desjardin demonstrates—made mathematical errors when calculating his troop strength after the battle. The other was written by a Union soldier who was a member of the 20th Maine, and penned the only history of the regiment, in which he agreed that the Union defenders of Little Round Top were seriously outnumbered by their Southern foes. With the publication of this second account, Confederate and Yankee seemed to be in agreement about their "facts," and henceforth the desperate

situation of the 20th Maine at Little Round Top was taken as gospel by both contemporaries and by succeeding generations. It was left to Desjardin, 140 years later, to discover that this particular Union soldier was actually hospitalized during the battle, and so therefore had to rely on the exaggerated accounts of his colleagues-in-arms when writing that portion of the book. Thus, a bit of Southern miscalculation and Northern innuendo combined to give rise to one of the most famous legends of the Civil War, and indeed of American history.

Desjardin's main interest—in fact, his passion—is detective work of this sort. As such, the book contains a great many examples of fascinating myth-busting, but it rarely moves beyond this type of analysis. Desjardin generally gives little more than passing attention to the purposes these myths serve, and what they might say about Americans. Given the lack of connection between the specific examples that Desjardin examines and the bigger picture, the subtitle of the book—How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory—is a bit of a misnomer. The book does almost nothing to address this larger question.

Taken together, however, Weeks' and Desjardin's books function well as companion pieces. Desjardin offers a series of specific case studies, while Weeks fills in the broader story. And so, as a contribution to the literature of Gettysburg, the whole created by reading these two books together is greater than the sum of the parts.

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Henning, Joseph M. *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American-Japanese Relations.* New York: New York University Press, 2000. $50.00 (Hard). 249 pp. ISBN: 081473605X.

"In mind, body, speech, thought, ways, institutions, [and] mental initiative," the Japanese are "the most un-Mongolian people in Asia," wrote William Elliot Griffis in the *North American Review* in 1911 (p. 160). Griffis, the leading authority on Japan of his era, was trying to resolve a Japanese paradox that bedeviled many turn-of-the-twentieth-century Americans: how could a non-white, heathen country be so technologically and politically

advanced? The industrialization and democratization that followed the Meiji Restoration in 1868 thrust Japan into American arguments about racial science, religion, and progress. In *Outposts of Civilization,* Joseph Henning examines how travel writers, journalists, diplomats, missionaries, scientists, artists, and other commentators on Japan tried to find room for it in their sometimes competing notions of civilization. Henning argues that, rather than subverting racial and religious hierarchies, the specter of modernizing Japan ultimately reinforced those hierarchies because Japanese political leaders themselves adopted Western discourses and because Anglo Americans found ways to reframe Japan as an exception that proved the rules.

Henning divides his exploration of early Japanese-American relations into thematic chapters analyzing how different groups of American visitors perceived and represented Japan's people and landscapes. Drawing on centuries-old Orientalist expectations, the first Americans who journeyed to Japan in the 1850s and 1860s portrayed the Japanese as "despotic, diminutive, and inferior" (p. 9). The economic and political reforms that flowed from the Meiji Restoration turned Japan into an industrializing democracy, impressing most American onlookers while distressing others. Protestant missionaries, with the cooperation of federal diplomats, pressured the Japanese government into easing centuries-old restrictions on public displays of Christianity. These missionaries insisted that only Christianity was "the soul of all true progress," in the words of one Methodist lecturer, and strove to turn Japan into a Protestant beacon illuminating all of Asia (p. 85). Scientists declared that Japan's progress was due to science, not religion, and gave lectures on Darwin and Spencer to the Japanese in an effort to promote a secular vision of civilization. Meanwhile, anti-modernist artists and art collectors complained that Japan was losing its primitive authenticity, rendering the country less useful in their critiques of the excesses of Western industrial capitalism. American diplomats tried to encourage Japan's modernization but resisted revising treaties signed in the 1850s that had turned Japan into a virtual colony of the United States and Great Britain.

In one way or another, all of these conflicting perceptions of Japan buttressed prevailing religious and racial ideas that insisted only white, Christian peoples could truly progress. Henning shows how Japan forced categories of race and religion to bend but not break. Commentators began to portray Japan as quasi-Christian, embodying the values of Christianity if not the actual practices.

Japanese Minister Hoshi Tōru agreed in the pages of *Harper's Monthly* in 1897: "We may not be a Christian nation in the strict sense of the expression, but we have omitted no effort to assimilate to our use the substance of Christian civilization" (p. 139). During the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, the United States unofficially supported Japan and American writers bent over backwards demonstrating how Confucianist Japan was actually more Christian than Orthodox Russia. Similarly, anthropologists debated the racial classification of the Japanese and found ways to preserve racial hierarchy by declaring them quasi-white. Experts said that the Ainu, a Japanese ethnic group believed to be ancestors of all Japanese, were originally Aryan. "White blood in the Japanese!" trumpeted a 1907 book by Griffis (p. 160).

Though essentially writing a book about Japan in the American mind, Henning tries to show how the Japanese shaped and made use of these ideas. He notes how political theorist Fukuzawa Yukichi, for example, adapted Western discourses of civilization, individualism, and imperialism to his own nationalistic ends. Japanese government officials likewise made use of these discourses to argue for treaty revision. But Henning does not appear to have conducted extensive research in Japan and has difficulty explaining the Japanese side of the story. He mentions the "hundreds of prints" produced by Japanese woodblock artists of Americans during the 1860s, but analyzes and reproduces none. Actual Japanese people remain a shadowy presence in his book.

However, Henning's portraits of American visitors are full-blooded and complex. He deftly shows how competing groups saw—and created—different Japans. The conflict between missionaries and scientists in Japan is especially well-chronicled. Although Henning and most historians emphasize how categories of race and religion reinforced each other, these episodes illustrate how race and religion could also be competing hierarchies. Considering the Japanese paradox in 1903, one missionary asked, "Are our theories wrong? Is Japan an exception?" (p. 146). Most Americans answered no and yes to those questions, demonstrating the resiliency, flexibility, and power of racial and religious ideologies.

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Alex Zwerdling, *Improvised Europeans: American Literary Expatriates and the Siege of London.* New York: Basic Books, 1998. xvi, 383 pp. ISBN: 0306812673

In *Improvised Europeans: American Literary Expatriates and the Siege of London,* literary historian Alex Zwerdling tracks the origins of Anglo-American modernism. His investigation examines the lives of four American literary figures whose identities – to a great extent – were formed by their connection to English cultural life. These four – Henry Adams, Henry James, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot – lived with a degree of affiliation to one another that is a reminder of the small concentric social circles in which New England patricians mixed: Adams and James were friends, James and Pound were familiars, Pound mentored Eliot.

Such connections, though interesting in their own sake, also had a great deal of significance. For Zwerdling, each of these literary figures hoped to detach himself from his American past and become allied with superior English (and European) culture. Each shared a sense of what Zwerdling calls "Anglo-Saxon panic," an anxiety about American culture in the dawn of the twentieth century. America's growing commercialism and parochialism threatened to render obsolete the New England mind with its adamantine self-discipline and regard for tradition as a form of cultural authority. Expatriating to Europe became a way to reclaim the cultural tradition and heritage that Americans were rejecting. Theirs was an attempt to transcend American national associations and to become cosmopolitan. It was in great part the desires and beliefs of such expatriate authors that led to the development of Anglo-American modernism.

In the opening chapters and the chapters on Adams, Zwerdling traces a shift of power from Britain to the United States and addresses the great changes in American demography brought on by the influx of immigrants, especially from central and southern Europe. He construes the late nineteenth century relationship between Britain and America to be one colored by insult and contempt, with British snobbery ignoring American literary power and American political might disregarding the weakening empire. At the same time, the men whom Zwerdling focuses attention upon – all of whom came from Protestant, pre-Revolutionary familes (in fact, Adams and Eliot were distantly related) – saw the force of the old order slipping and it frightened them.

This Anglo-Saxon panic was most pronounced in Adams. Disdainful of a world he saw polluted by greed and corruption. Adams felt ill at ease in the new America. Zwerdling recounts Adams' various attempts to live outside the stream of the new forces while still remaining influential – writing history, for one, or editing the *North American Review*. Or writing novels about the decline of American political life, while working behind the curtains of the very political scene he criticized. After the death of his wife Marion Adams, he spent more time in Europe (and traveling in the East) than in the States. The time he spent in London, though, declined as he surrendered to wanderlust that only heightened his sense of displacement and failure.

James, who arrived in England with letters of introduction from Adams, more successfully took to the life of the expatriate. Still, Zwerdling notes a thread between the novels of James and the sentiments of Adams regarding the overwhelming sense of failure and anxiety. For all the authors, Pound and Eliot as well, self-imposed exile in Europe allowed them to reclaim traditions that their mother-country had, in their view, surrendered to run-away capitalism and the immigrant horde. But in their desire to reclaim Europe, to wash away the multiple and conflicting American sins of provincialism, corrupt pluralism, and an uncouth avarice, the four were also attempting to universalize their work. But this attempt had its risks. In moving towards the cosmopolitan outlook these authors often mistook Europeanism for universalism. Moreover, the more successful they became in embracing cosmopolitanism, the more displaced from the roots of their American cultural authority they became. The success or failure of these authors in their displaced conditions (James remained in England; Eliot became a British citizen; Pound died in shame, a fascist sympathizer; Adams never surrendered his Washington D.C. home, but lived out his years in trans-Atlantic drift) is critical to an understanding of literary modernism.

Despite making clear their connection both to each other and to literary modernism:

> The birth of Anglo-American modernism as a self-conscious movement owes a great deal to the overlap (and the shared assumptions) of these displaced Americans. They may be said to constitute a transgenerational ideological dispensation, with common assumptions about nation and culture, the role

> of the metropolis, the relationship between artist and audience, and between America and Europe. (217)

Zwerdling nonetheless falls short of providing a precise definition of literary modernism. But the value of his work is still clear: in clearly linking these four to the stream of Anglo-American literary modernism, the stage is set for making inquiries into other modernisms. For Zwerdling, the perseverance of these authors' works in the literary canon is enough to justify his inquiry, but the larger question of why these works have lasted is quite another issue. The problem that themes within early modernist literature suggest retrograde conservatism – patrician heritage, anxiety about technology and corporate power, anti-Semitism, ambivalence towards progress, dispassionate detachment, and retreat into historical allusion – inform our historical understanding of modernism. More importantly, the problem of modernism is international, the main idea promoted in *Improvised Europeans,* although the focus is in on Anglo-American relations. Zwerdling presents good literary history. His theoretical model may be subterranean to his narrative about what happened in the expatriate years of literary modernism, but he uses author's texts, diaries, biographies and various primary and secondary source documents to excellent effect, providing a good model for research as well as for the approach to collective biography.

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